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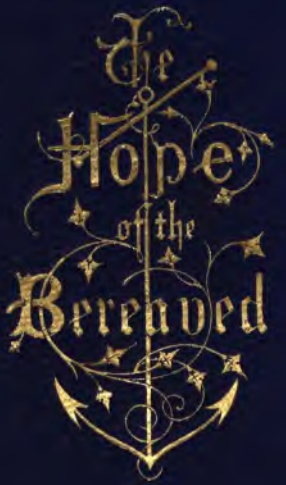
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The
Hope
of the
Bereaved

FIRST EDITION.

HOPE OF THE BEREAVED.

Opinions of the Press.

"We cannot imagine any book more suitable for the reading of those whose homes have been left desolate by death."—*Belfast News-Letter.*

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Shortly will be Published,

UNIFORM WITH

"THE HOPE OF THE BEREAVED,"

WITH AN

ENGRAVED AND TINTED FRONTISPIECE,

CHILDREN IN HEAVEN;

OR,

THE FINAL DESTINY OF THE INFANT RACE.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

Wm. M'Comb, BELFAST.

Hamilton, Adams & Co., LONDON.

THE

HOPE OF THE BEREAVED;

OR,

Recognition in Heaven.




BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA



Christian wayfarer [illegible]—Heaven is smiling above you. Look on—Heaven is opening before you. Let your tears if they must fall be as the drops of rain which fall on the sun shine and reflect the colours of the Rainbow. P. 116

THE

HOPE OF THE BEREAVED;

OR,

Recognition in Heaven.

BY THE

REV. EDWIN DAVIES.

"Hast thou not glimpses, in the twilight hour,
Of mountains where immortal morn prevails?
Comes there not through the silence to thine ear,
A gentle rustling of the morning gale,—
A murmur, wafted from that glorious shore,
Of streams that water banks for ever fair,
And voices of the lov'd ones gone before,
More musical in that celestial air?"

Second Edition.

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1854.

141. a. 109.

To my Mother,

WHO HAS PASSED THROUGH MANY OF THE PAINFUL SCENES,

AND BEEN

SUPPORTED BY THE HOLY CONSOLATIONS,

WHICH ARE HEREIN UNFOLDED,

THIS LITTLE VOLUME,

ON THE FAITH AND HOPE OF THE BEREAVED

IN THE RE-UNION AND

Recognition of Christian Friends in Heaben,

IS INSCRIBED,

WITH DEVOUT GRATITUDE AND FILIAL AFFECTION,

BY

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

It is passing strange that the delightful dogma of recognition in heaven should ever have been a disputed subject; and yet, when we remember how prone men are to entertain erroneous views,—that here the wisest "see through a glass, darkly,"—and that the truthfulness of more important realities are called into question, our surprise vanishes at once, and we feel the force of the emphatic statement of Inspiration,—"the god of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not." There are also not a few professing Christians of the philosophic school who, whilst they firmly believe in the final restoration of humanity to more than its aboriginal beauty and dignity—in its re-union with its superior and deathless counterpart—and in its induction into the bliss and glory of the life eternal, do not cherish the sublime fact which this simple and earnest little volume attempts to unfold. To such we would apply the utterance of the Great Teacher—"Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God."

It was not the primal intention of the Author of

these pages to take up the gauntlet of the opposers of this holy and celestial doctrine, and break a controversial lance with a vaunting scepticism and a philosophic religionism; but, after a careful and scriptural examination of the tenets of each class, he found that, instead of their doing damage to the truth disputed, they were conducive to its security and permanency, and he has used them for that purpose. Like the divining rods of the magicians of Egypt, which were made subservient to the confirmation of the Divine mission entrusted to the meek Hebrew shepherd, so the weapons of the adversaries of this precious verity, instead of proving destructive, serve to garrison that which they resolved to overthrow and demolish. The chief design of the Author was, to do his utmost to soothe and pacify the grief-stricken heart by the administration of the cordial of heavenly consolation. In an instrumental sense, it is the high and holy office of the Christian minister "to bind up the broken-hearted, to comfort all that mourn; to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."

The Author makes no lofty pretension to originality of thought, as he thinks the same ideas may have

occurred to ordinary minds, and, for aught he knows, may have been published before. Without the aid of any particular work, save that Book which has the bright stamp of divinity upon its holy pages, he has thought out the subject in his own way. He has cultivated great simplicity of style and sentiment, knowing that such writing is the best calculated to for general edification, and is the more likely to soothe and comfort the mourning spirit. Unadorned truths, like the simplest melodies, possess a magical potency, which seldom fails to calm the perturbations of the afflicted heart.

"It may be glorious to write
Thoughts that shall glad the two or three
High souls, like those far stars that come in sight
Once in a century;
But better far it is to speak
One simple word, which now and then
Shall waken a new nature in the weak
And sinful sons of men."

The critic, if he feels disposed, will find plenty of work before him in these pages; but he must remember that their materials were collected together not to dazzle the eye, or charm the ear, but to make glad with heavenly hope the bleeding heart of bereaved humanity.

The Author not only submits his "little book" to his readers with sincere diffidence, but also with the fervent prayer that the God of truth may sanctify its earnest perusal to their deathless souls, and bless it to the promotion of the divine glory.

"And all in His hand whose praise we seek,
Whose frown can disappoint the proudest strain,
Whose approbation prosper—even ours."

E. D.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

It is very gratifying to the Author of this little volume that the first edition was sold off in less than three months after its issue from the press, and that many who were professedly sceptical on the doctrine of mutual recognition in heaven have been pleased to express not only their satisfaction with the manner in which the delightful subject is treated, but also their firm conviction of its sublime reality. Others, also, who have been bereaved, have read it in faith and hope, and, by the sanctification of the Holy Spirit, have felt their anticipations brightened and established, and their mourning spirits soothed by its holy consolations. It was specially for those who have been bereft of their Christian friends, and who have stood by their dying pillow—witnessed their last struggle—heard their last utterance—felt their last touch, and who have committed them to the grave, and beheld, with scalding tears, the cold clods heaped upon their

still bosom, not to arise "till the heavens be no more," that this work was written. If the sceptical have been convinced, and Christian mourners comforted, very thankful is the writer that both ends have been accomplished in one.

In bringing out a second edition, the Author begs to state, that, since the publication of the first, he has read all the works he could obtain which have been written on the subject both in England and America, and, after comparing notes, he finds it unnecessary to alter a single paragraph or abandon a single proposition of his own. The two or three volumes which have been published are anything but calculated to be popular in this reading age, inasmuch as they are either too large or expensive for the generality of readers. In this publication both these extremes are avoided, whilst no truth or argument of importance is laid aside. The work has been carefully re-written for this edition, and the Author trusts it will meet with a world-wide approbation, and become a universal instrumentality in brightening the dark homes and cheering the mourning hearts of "the sons and daughters of affliction."

JULY, 1854.

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THE

HOPE OF THE BEREAVED;

OR,

Recognition in Heaven.

CHAPTER I.

THE CREEDS OF DESPAIR AND FAITH.

"Know well, my soul, God's hand controls
Whate'er thou fearest;
Round Him in calmest music rolls
Whate'er thou hearest.

And that cloud itself, which now before thee
Lies dark in view,
Shall, with beams of light from the inner glory,
Be stricken through."

Of all the creeds in the world entertained by rational men, the sceptic's is the most repulsive and cheerless, inasmuch as it clashes with the bright hopes and catholic yearnings of the human heart, and is directly opposed to philosophical reasoning, and the sublime

tions of Divine truth. If, whilst he would bereave humanity of its instinctive desires and celestial hopes, he could give in return a correspondently valuable equivalent, our surprise would be considerably abated, and we should wonder less that such a creed should be cherished with such tenacity, and promulgated with such ardour. But when Atheism would throw back every sunny ray, and benight us in these dark regions of sorrow and death; when it would pluck up every lovely and fragrant flower, and leave us nothing more than a blighted world to look upon; when it would drive hope from the human bosom, and enthrone despair in its stead; when it would entomb mortality and immortality in the close sepulchre of annihilation, and so end the history and life of man at the brink of the grave —we are astounded that thinking men should cherish it. There is, however, a law or principle upon which we can account for such an impious absurdity, and that is laid down in the forceful statement of the Sacred Oracles—"The fool hath said in his *heart*, there is no God."

The atheist asserts that matter is eternal, that the world is an orphan thing, and that immortal

man is the hapless child of fate, the natural heir of corruption, and the spoil of the greedy earth-worm. He avers, moreover, that there is no order or design in the universe, save that which "dame nature" or "blind chance" have chosen. "I cannot see," he vauntfully exclaims, "the handiwork of a God in the midnight sky, though it is lit up with glorious splendour. Those stars, that sun and moon, are but the altar-fires of nature, blazing for no other purpose than to light and cheer man. The beauty of the fragrant flowers of Spring—the wonderful and innumerable adaptations of one thing to another which I see around me—the bright morning and the shady evening—the changing seasons of the year—and the teeming crowds of living and rational beings, are all to be ascribed, not to an intelligent 'First Cause,' but to 'eternal laws' or 'principles,' which have ever been in operation, to produce all that is seen, and heard, and felt." Is not such a creed the creed of despair? Sun and moon, earth and ocean, worlds on worlds, with their everlasting and harmonious voices, roll back upon such a one his baseless and cursed theory.

The deist, it is true, believes in the existence of a God, but seeks to exclude Him altogether from the work of His own hands, forgetting that there is even a greater need for the Divine conservation of all created things than there could be for their formation. True, God is gloriously great, and the planet on which we tread exceedingly small in comparison with others moving in the infinitude of space; yet why should either the majesty of the one, or the comparative insignificance of the other, be considered as objectionable to the Divine complacency and intervention? Surely it is not beneath God, great and glorious as He is, to take care of and govern the world He has made. If He stooped to do the one, why not stoop to do the other? Is it likely that an architect would be at the trouble and expense of drawing out plans, and building a splendid palace, to be a standing monument of his artistic and mechanical skill, and, when finished, abandon it to the ravages of time, or any fatality that might happen it? Or, would a brave and persevering mariner pilot his ship, laden with a valuable cargo of gold dust and precious things, across the tem-

pestuous ocean, and, when in sight of "the haven where he would be," leave her to be the disport of wind and wave, or dashed to pieces by the destructive breakers against the rocky shore? Never! The notion that the Creator of the world is not the Governor of the world, or that science is the providence of man, is a superlatively impious absurdity! He "made man in His own image, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life," and endowed him with bright intelligence, keen perception, and deep sympathy—not that he might be happy or miserable, live or die, as fate might determine, but that in his body and spirit he might glorify Him, and become a successful candidate for eternal life. If the deist's creed were true, then sinful and wretched man would either give himself up to the unrestrained indulgence of his animal and depraved passions, or sink speedily under the crushing pressure of terrestrial sorrow and hopelessness. Thank God! such a theory is not the catholic utterance of the human heart, neither is it in harmony with the sublime realities of Revelation!

The pantheist rushes to the other extreme. He tells us that nature is God; and that all we

shall ever see of Deity we now see in the material creation. His theory is that the Divine Being is simply "matter," and not "a spirit" His conjectures are confined to the sordid regions of sense, and are bounded by the cold and earthy abstractions of a rationalistic philosophy. His altar is reason; his deity is nature. He recognises not the heavenly, the spiritual, the infinite. Like the man whose sightless eyeballs were anointed by Christ, and who at first saw "men as trees walking," the pantheist sees great truths only partially. The natural mind is warped by natural objects, and the spiritual vision is shrouded in the Egyptian night of a cheerless and material philosophy.

How vastly superior is the Christian's creed of faith to the free-thinker's creed of despair! He does not, as did the refined Voltaire and his disciples, regard the human intellect as the chief object of supreme admiration; nor, as the voluptuous Rousseau, look upon the beauties of nature as the deity of the heart. He admires genius in man, and he has an eye for the beautiful in nature; but, whilst he regards each with a surpassing and sanctified admiration, he worships neither, and the most valued treasures

but ascends through all to Him who fashioned and endowed all, and, with the immortal Milton, exclaims—

"These are Thy glorious works, Parent of good,
Almighty! Thine this universal frame,
Thus wondrous fair. Thyself how wondrous, then!
Unspeakable; who sitt'st above these heavn's,
To us invisible, or dimly seen
In these Thy lower works; yet these declare
Thy goodness beyond thought, and power Divine."

In these "glorious works" the Christian perceives the footprints of his Father-God—the autograph of Divine beneficence—the impress of celestial love, and wonders what is man that God should be mindful of him, and the son of man that He should visit him! God is seen and felt by him to be in everything: in the restless ocean, and the sparkling dew-drop—in the revolution of the heavenly bodies, and the motion of an atom—in the overturning of a throne, and the falling of a sparrow—in the exit of a monarch, and the death of an insect! Where the vulgar eye sees nothing but the "thick darkness," he sees "light," clear as midday. Where others imagine they perceive

the movements of dame fortune, he discovers the dispensations of Divine Providence. Where they see nothing but chaos, he perceives order, and design, and glory. Where they hear nought save the bellowings of the fierce storm, and are smitten with terror, he listens without fear to the succeeding whisperings of the still small voice—"It is I; be not afraid!" He believes there are no real accidents, that every event happens according to the appointment and decree of Heaven, that He who has "the keys of hell and of death" in his mighty hold, opens and shuts the sepulchre at His pleasure, and that "not a sparrow falleth to the ground without his Father's notice." He does not trace either his trials or his blessings merely to "second causes," but he feels they have their primal origin in the Divine purpose. Health and sickness, poverty and wealth, life and death, are regarded by him as the disciplinary instrumentalities of a chastening and loving Father, and therefore he is resigned both in "the day of adversity," as well as in "the day of prosperity." Possessing a firm faith in the sublime teachings and holy covenants of Scripture, he is persuaded that "all things work together

for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." The doctrine of Divine superintendence and intervention is therefore to the Christian a consoling reality, but to the ungodly it is a subject full of mystery and contradictions. It is like the preternatural cloud which hung from God's throne over the Hebrew camp, when they were migrating from Egypt to Canaan: to them it was a source of no common joy and guidance, but to the vengeful Egyptians it was charged with mystery and terror, and was an obstruction to the execution of their sanguinary purpose.

And yet, while the believer is comforted and sustained by the delightful dogma of Divine Providence, there are many strange passages in it he cannot understand—many mysterious hieroglyphics he cannot decipher. No wonder; "for now we see through a glass, darkly; * * now we know in part." We see only the dim outline of the Divine purpose; eternity will fill it up in all its proportionate form and beauty. Many dispensations seem laden with evil, rather than fraught with good, and are too frequently regarded by God's adopted ones as

indications of Divine wrath, rather than—what they really are—chastisements of paternal love. Affluence makes to herself wings, and flies away, and stern penury, with bold step, crosses the threshold of the prosperous and happy dwelling; or the barrel of meal wastes, and the cruse of oil fails. Sickness triumphs over health, blanches the rose on the cheek with mortal paleness, shuts out from the busy activeness of life, and confines her unwilling prisoner to the darkened chamber of suffering. Professed friends, too, forsake the needy, and leave them lonely as the solitary tree of the desert, or, as was the case with the princely patriarch of Uz, only remain to aggravate—rather than assuage—their deep anguish. Well-earned fame is blasted by reproachful calumny, and a fair character blistered by disreputable statements. It is, alas! too often the actual experience of God's people that—

"When sorrows come, they come not single spies,
But in battalions."

But the bereaving dispensation which removes those who "were lovely and pleasant in their lives" is the crowning sorrow and calamity of

all. The young, the beautiful, and the accomplished, are beckoned away to the unknown spirit-land. The lovely babe—the first-born, or the last-born—is torn from the warm embrace of the loving parent; the gay bride is borne from the hymeneal altar; wedded hearts are sundered by a single stroke; and "lover, and friend, and acquaintance" are consigned to the darkness of the grave. Bright household lights are quenched in night. The free and merry laughter of innocent childhood no longer rings—like the chimes of angels—on the family hearthstone. The affectionate mother, whose smile was the brightest radiation, and whose voice was the sweetest music in the family circle, is no longer found occupying her anxious post. The patriarch's "old arm-chair" in the chimney nook is vacant; and "the delight of the eyes" is forced away by an unseen power, when their virtues were mellowed, and at a juncture when their presence and example were never more needed in the happy homes they adorned. The golden links of life have been rudely snapped, and are missing; the home-circle has been scattered; the most lovely and fragrant flowers of humanity have been plucked,

and as Dr. Johnson fitly has it, "what is nearest to us touches us most, the passions rise higher at domestic than at imperial tragedies!" How severely mournful and true are the following touching lines of Longfellow :—

"There is no flock, however watch'd and tended,
But one dead lamb is there!
There is no fireside, howsoe'er defended,
But has one vacant chair!

The air is full of farewells to the dying,
And mournings for the dead;
The heart of Rachel, for her children crying,
Will not be comforted!"

When death breaks into our homes, like a true robber, he lays his hand upon the most valuable spoil, and appropriates to himself our choicest treasures. If he bore away only the aged and infirm—men who had lived out their "threescore years and ten"—we might then be *somewhat* reconciled to the bereaving dispensation; but "Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away." The brightness and happiness of life seemed to go with our departed ones. The happy home became like a deserted place. The glad voices which once sounded in it were silenced. A chasm was

made in the social heart which nothing sublunary could fill up. And as the anniversary of their exodus from "the land of bondage" revolves, the wounds of the bereaved heart reopen, and bleed afresh with the bitter recollection of the irreparable loss the survivor has sustained. True, time smooths many rough passages in life's history, and gradually and mercifully relieves the mind of those scenes and the heart of those sorrows which in their sad actualizations were the most harrowing to witness, and agonizing to bear; but the lone spirit will never rest until they are restored who were rudely torn from it, or until it joins them in the painless and deathless regions above. We have lost our idols: death, Rachel-like, has taken them from us. How ready we were, when we awoke to our loss, to imitate the impetuous action of Laban, and, if possible, recover our stolen property! But though the angry patriarch pursued and overtook the fugitive party, he returned without his gods; Rachel carried them to another country. And has not death done the same with ours? The human idols we worshipped on earth, are now glorified magnets, attracting us heavenward.

Blessed reality! if our hearts are where God has gathered our treasures!

Bereaving dispensations are sometimes divine retributions. If a doting mother, or a fond father, make their child their all, and if humanity is permitted to take and occupy the throne of the heart, it is frequently the case that a jealous and slighted God removes the human idol to make room for himself. He will permit no rival to occupy the chief seat in the affections, nor any person or thing to share its throne with himself. He must and will be primal in the heart of the Christian.

And sometimes the retribution which parents have deserved falls on their innocent offspring, as in the humiliating experience of the "man after God's own heart." David fell; and what fall his was! Like the towering eagle, he was brought to the dust by the shaft of the too skilful archer. He was no common man, and hence his fall was no common fall. But the guilty and penitent father was pardoned and absolved, whilst the child of hope was struck to death by the bolt of divine justice. And yet how much mercy there was mingled with wrath! Man never suffers as he has deserved.

When the fearful storm has swept past, the bright sun shines out again as glorious as ever, and the beautiful bow of promise spans the dark and threatening cloud. God hides His face because of sin; but when divine forgiveness and absolution is earnestly sought through His Son, the bright sheen of his reconciled countenance fills the penitent and believing heart with holy and celestial joy.

It is a popular and current saying concerning precocious childhood, that they are "too clever to live," and "too good for earth." And there is in such a proverb something more than mere adage. Many a solicitous parent has regarded such precociousness as a presage of an early death—a premonition of a speedy exodus to another world. "Coming events cast their shadows before them." And how often has this been actualized! How many empty cradles and weeping mothers could add their sorrowful testimony to its fatal truthfulness! Christ gathers the opening lily in His garden, as well as the full-blown rose—childhood, as well as hoary age.

And not only do the young give these sad and startling intimations of their intended

and speedy departure to a better and a brighter world, but also the holy and ripened saint. The death of much-prized Christian friends, whilst to them "to die is gain," is such a catastrophe to surviving relations that, not until all hope is absolutely futile, will they cherish the agonising conviction that the parting hour is close at hand; and hence it is that affection —which often hopes against hope—was unwilling to observe those palpable and holy indications which tacitly proclaimed "the time of departure at hand." But the sainted dead felt the pins of the human tabernacle giving way; or, by some mysterious intuition, the sublime assurance of the noble captive of the Mammertine prison at Rome was impressed on their hearts. Consequently, their conversation became more heavenly, their prayers more intensely fervent, and their spiritual exercises more hallowed and redolent of the sanctity of the blest. The savour and unction which gathered round them in their last earthly hours was the celestial anointing for their burial. The nearer the eagle soars towards the orb of day, the brighter is its flashing eye; and the closer our departed friends approxi-

mated to the world of light and joy, the brighter was their path, and the holier their characters. They listened to mysterious sounds, and saw glorious sights we did not. They beheld celestial beings, and heard celestial voices beckoning them to the skies, and saying, "Come up hither!" and they began at once to plume their wings for the heavenward flight. They are gone; and we now call them the sainted dead. Their departure seemed like a golden cloud of evening, which hid itself at the moment of its highest splendour; and even now their holy example ever and anon comes up before memory's view as a beautiful and unearthly vision of seraphic loveliness! Would that we had prized them when with us, as we do now they are gone from us! They were ministers of love—angels in human guise!

"Thus star by star declines,
Till all are passed away,
As morning high and higher shines,
To pure and perfect day;
Nor sink those stars in empty night,
But hide themselves in heaven's own light."

And ought not heaven to gather and retain within itself the best and purest of earth? Death

is sent to pluck the flowers that are most ripe for glory, and there they bloom in amaranthine beauty. The sparkling dew-drop, which the night deposited in the cup of the lovely flower, is exhaled by the sun, only to be set a more brilliant gem in the beautiful rainbow. Heaven is enriched by our losses and the spoils of death. "We gaze upon the empty nest, to follow the new-fledged bird to the grave or well which now it haunts, and where now it warbles. We stoop down, and look into the tomb, to be confirmed, by the grave-clothes left behind, that he who wore them is risen! What lovely youth, what blossoming excellence, what chastened meekness, what saintly purity, are withdrawn but to be transplanted! 'My beloved is gone down into his garden to gather lilies.' What bright and splendid virtues are constantly snatched from us! 'I make up my jewels.' All, all are there! Not one is wanting!"

But our unseen ones are no more lost to us than they are unremembered and unloved by us. Infidelity says they are, but Christianity says they are not. They are like the stars by day which, though invisible to the human eye,

shine on in the blue vault of heaven. We joy in the same blessed anticipation which solaced the heart of the bereaved monarch of Israel—"I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." In this blissful hope of greeting our departed ones where "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither any more pain," the lonely and grieving spirit finds a spring of holy consolation more than equal to counterbalance the crushing weight of bereaving agony. Sometimes we are favoured with bright visions and glorious apocalypses of this blessed state; scenes of unearthly splendour oft fall like an ocean of light and beauty upon our contemplative and entranced spirits, and we forget that this is a vale of tears—the region of the shadow of death!

Our fathers, and children, and friends, have left our firesides, and crossed the Jordan of death, and, on the opposite shores of Canaan, are awaiting our arrival in that "goodly land." "Rise, let us be going!"

CHAPTER II.

HUMAN PHILOSOPHY AND DIVINE TRUTH.

"All shall teem with life, the converging fragments of humanity,
Till every conscious essence greet his individual frame;
For in some dignified similitude, alike, yet different in glory,
This body shall be shaped anew, fit dwelling for the soul:
The hovel hath grown to a palace, the bulb hath burst into the flower,
Matter hath put on incorruption, and is at peace with spirit.
Amen! and so it shall be."

A LATE distinguished Christian poet has styled the Bible "The bright candle of the Lord—the star of eternity!" This is as true as it is beautiful. Man has wandered from the sheepfold of God on the dark mountains of sin and death. He has forsaken the fountain of living waters, and hewn out to himself broken cisterns that can hold no water. And what makes his sinful condition the more deplorable is, that he

apprehends not either his present danger, or the future consequences of his guilt. Now, it is the gracious province of the Bible to convey this startling fact to his mind and heart, that he may know something of his perilous state. But the Bible does not rest here, or it would prove an instrument of despair and death. Like the star of Bethlehem, which guided the wise men of the East to the stable and manger "where the young child lay" who was the destined Saviour of the world, the Bible leads the polluted and wretched sinner to Christ and His finished work, that he may, by believing in Him, obtain "redemption through His blood," and the hope of eternal life. To make men "wise unto salvation" is, therefore, the grand and glorious aim of "the Gospel of the blessed God." This being its primal and chief design, we cannot so much wonder that on subordinate subjects we have not so clear and full a revelation as on those truths which relate to the salvation of the immortal soul. There is a thick veil of mystery permitted to hang over many truly interesting subjects, which eternity will alone fully discover to us. Like the worshipping Jew who stood outside, and looked so in-

tently on the beautiful veil of the temple, which curtained in "the holiest of all," as though he would look it through, to know what was divinely hidden from the vulgar gaze of the multitude, a prying curiosity would fain lift the thick and sable covering which hides the eternal state, and scan its celestial wonders and glories before pacing the golden streets, and basking beneath the burning splendours of the beatific world. But we are not permitted the vision of him who "was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." "We know in part;" and "what we know not now, we shall know hereafter." Now, because we know not in full everything concerning the future state, many are the queries propounded by persons interested in subjects of a celestial character. Some ask, does the emancipated spirit, as some have asserted, sink into a state of spiritual dormancy, until the resurrection of its frail counterpart, or take its flight from the corrupting body direct to heaven? Others inquire, are there degrees of glory in heaven—one star differing from another star in glory? And the bereaved, with deep emotional feeling, seek to

know whether there will be mutual recognition in heaven of their departed Christian friends? To all these vastly important interrogatories, the Bible answers in the affirmative. It is our pleasing province to deal only with the latter and the most interesting inquiry of the three, and to demonstrate that the delightful and animating dogma of heavenly recognition is not a chimera floating in man's brain, but a doctrine written as with a sunbeam upon the holy pages of Scripture.

But we have strong opposers first to contend with and silence, and cavilling objections to refute and overthrow; for, strange though it may appear, there are professing Christians, as well as vauntful sceptics, who deny this sacred doctrine; and there are pious philosophers who say it is a very pleasing fact, if true: they do not oppose, but they doubt it. Let us meet these enemies of the bright hopes and deep yearnings of humanity, in a spirit of earnest and faithful inquiry, to ascertain if we really are to abandon this "pearl of blessings" for the cheerless dogmas of human philosophy, or clasp it to the heart as one of its brightest and choicest treasures.

The first popular objection we grapple with is professedly based on the confounding reply made by the Great Teacher to the carping question of the Sadducees, as to whose wife she should be in the resurrection who had been married to seven husbands. These Hebrew sceptics disbelieved both the resurrection of the body, and the immortality of the soul, and therefore sought to confuse the God-man, by propounding a subtle query, which they ignorantly regarded as involving a total absurdity on both these points. The drift of their proposition is as follows:—If there be a resurrection of the body, then there must also be a resurrection of the relationship of earth, which will place the woman in a dilemma, as each of her seven husbands will have an equal claim upon her future attachment and association. Now, let us turn to the sublime reply which some say overthrows the doctrine of recognition in heaven. "And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: neither can they die

any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection."—LUKE xx c. 34—36 v. Christ here shows, in his simple and beautiful way, the vast difference which obtains between this and the hereafter estate. The children of this world must marry, and be given in marriage, because death is in the world, and unless there was a regular succession of mankind, it would be speedily depopulated. But "in the resurrection," men will no longer be mortal, for "this mortal shall put on immortality," and "death will be swallowed up in victory." They will then be "equal unto the angels," not only in the deathlessness of their being, but also in the nature of their attachments; consequently, marriage, and its institution, will pass away, as the human necessity for adding to the death-thinned ranks of mortality will no longer remain. Now, in all this, we find not a solitary intimation that the near friendships we formed on earth will be either forgotten, or unrenewed in heaven, nor that, "in the resurrection" it will be an utter impossibility to recognise our Christian friends where "they neither marry nor are given in marriage."

Unquestionably, the *natural tie* and the *natural affection* will be unknown and unfelt in the celestial economy, but the *spiritual tie* and the *spiritual affection* will most assuredly form an important element in the eternal state of glorified humanity. Marriage may be regarded as a civil contract only; but this is not its highest end. It is a sacred and mystical fellowship of spirits, whose affinities will be known, and felt, and perpetuated in eternity. At the resurrection, the converted who have been "yoked" with the unconverted, will be parted from them; there will be an everlasting separation made between the sheep and the goats: the tares will be bound in bundles for the burning, whilst the wheat will be gathered into the garner. O how this solemn thought should regulate the conduct, and determine the choice, of believers in Christ Jesus! We maintain, then, that not only does not the language of Jesus overthrow the doctrine of heavenly recognition, but the rather establishes it; for had such not been a truth to be actualized in the future experience of believing friends, we think it would have been stated on the occasion. Blessed be God! we shall be able to recognise each other,

even where "the former things are passed away."

A second objection—somewhat connected with that which we have already discussed is —if the glorified will be able to recognise their saved friends in heaven, by the principle of the same law they must also know their lost friends in perdition; and that, if the knowledge of the one is a cause of exultation, the knowledge of the other must be a source of grief. These objectors affirm that, as the dogma of mutual recognition would involve consequences fatal to the joys of the blessed, it is, therefore, a very questionable theory. Taking this philosopheme—which "is of the earth, earthy"—as correct, it would naturally lead us to entertain the dreadful idea that heaven is not a place and state of absolute perfection. Many have been the attempts to remove the difficulties which are raised by such an objection. Bishop Mant reasons that because of the absence of lost friends from heaven, the remembrance of them will eventually be obliterated from the memories of the blest. This is a mode of reasoning with which we cannot concur, inasmuch as it clashes with the consum-

mation of the faculty of memory, which will doubtless for ever retain the knowledge of such a tremendous catastrophe, whilst the heart cannot for a moment sorrow on account of it. Constituted as we now are, such a bitter thought is most agonizing in its contemplation. Such feelings are in harmony with our present state, and are indispensable to personal exertion for their salvation: but in the very nature of things they cannot be experienced in heaven. Archbishop Whately states that "the blest will be able, by an effort of the will, completely to banish and exclude every idea that might alloy their happiness." Will not the perfection of the happiness of heaven render every such "effort" completely superfluous? We think it will. We grant, therefore, the hypothesis that the glorified will know the unalterable destiny of *all* their friends: but what does the argument of the non-recognitionist gain by such an admission? Why, absolutely nothing. All the beautiful and glorious representations which the Scriptures give us of heaven are—that it is a sinless and sorrowless region: it could not be heaven were it otherwise. Its perfection will exclude every

element hostile to unbroken and unbounded joy. *There*, the spirit *cannot* experience a moment's depression, nor the heart heave a single sigh, nor the eye weep a solitary tear! Every sorrowful attribute will be left out of the new and apposite organization. "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" —that is, He shall remove altogether the fountain of tears from the "spiritual body"—"and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." —REV. XXI c. 4 v. Some, however, think there may be tears of joy shed in heaven: this is only a poet's dream. The Apocalyptic assertion is, that "God shall wipe away *all* tears from their eyes." If the fountain, which gives life to tears, be removed, as the inspired John says it will, from whence then will tears flow? The soul may *now* need the auxiliation of tears to express her bursting joy, but *then*, smiles of rapture—not tears of joy—will be her appropriate and celestial expression! No; not a single tear-drop will ever fall on the golden pavement of the city of God—not a single sigh will mingle and clash with the ever-sounding

harmonies of the New Jerusalem! In hell the "cursed" weep for ever and ever! Perdition is an everlasting Bochim! In heaven the "blessed" smile for ever and ever! There is no more "sorrow, nor crying!"

Then, again, there will be a perfect harmony between the Divine Mind and that of every saint in glory. Their wills will be absorbed and lost in God's will, just as the running river is in the full ocean—just as the silvery moonlight is in the golden sunlight. There will be no dissent from His will *then*, there is *now*: and though we frequently exclaim—"Not *my* will, but *Thine* be done," yet we never feel as we ought that complete abnegation of self, and that entire resignation of heart, which should ever be the uniform accompaniments of such an unselfish and holy utterance. But in "glory everlasting" that exclamation will be fully and gloriously actualized, and God's will will be felt to be the supreme and grand law of heaven. If, therefore, a friend should be lost in perdition, (which may the Fountain of Mercy prevent!) the saint will feel so intensely the justice and righteousness of such a loss as, without a faltering accent or sorrowful emotion, to add "Amen," *to their everlasting* condemnation and death!

Other objections raised against the doctrine of recognition in heaven—are drawn from those unscriptural and unwarrantable views which philosophers have entertained regarding the peculiarities of the resurrection body.

It is a theory taught by man—that the human tenements in which we live are transmissive, and have been inhabited before, either by animals or human kind. If this be true, we shall hereafter be found in the same dilemma as the captious Sadducees imagined the woman would be who had had seven husbands—several spirits will be claiming and disputing the possession of one body. Such a philosophy is its own refutation.

Men of sceptical minds gibingly ask us—how can the dead bodies of the martyr-saints which were burnt at the stake, and others which have been devoured by wild beasts, and others which have been uncoffined and unburied, the ashes of which have been scattered far and wide by the winds of heaven, or exhaled into the atmosphere, or, when resolved into earthy matter, have been absorbed by plants, and thus formed an intimate connection with their substances—how can these dead bodies, so burnt, and eaten,

and dispersed, and intimately combined with other substances, be re-separated, and re-collected, so as to form the original again, and preserve their identity, which is absolute, if the doctrine of heavenly recognition be true? We readily grant that the fires of anti-Christian persecution have been lighted, and have consumed the bodies of the men "of whom the world was not worthy," and that other fatal calamities have secured the death, and wasted the frames of thousands; nations have been sacrificed to the Moloch of war, and their wounded carcases have rotted and bleached on the plains of bloody strife, yet we believe there are parts, and germs, and atoms of humanity which are incapable of change, and are, therefore, indestructible. No finite power can utterly destroy those essential and deathless characteristics and they cannot be lost, for God's unsleeping eye is ever on them, whether they lie undisturbed in the city cemetery, or are scattered far and wide amongst the sands of the arid desert, or are washed by the waters of the great ocean. The body of the drowned sailor may incorporate itself into that of the fish which swallows him; that, also, of the venturous traveller may

mix with the body of the ferocious animal which devours it as its prey; the grave-worms may revel and fatten on human corruption; and the mortal dust of our burying-places may unite with the yew trees which stretch out their dark and sheltering branches, banner-like, over the quiet resting-place of the sleeping dead, yet, "*this* mortal"—*this* identical body —"shall put on immortality!" The Scriptures are most emphatic on this point. Job believed that though after his skin worms destroyed his body, yet in that self-same body and flesh should he see God. And thus in the early ages—although many contend that "the world's grey fathers" knew nothing of the immortality of the soul, and the resurrection of the body—a voice sounded clear and loud, that the glorious doctrine of the resurrection of the dead with all their identification of form and feature, was both a creed of faith and a hope of the heart. St. Paul does not say—corruption will put on incorruption, and mortality put on immortality, but "*this* corruption," and "*this* mortal," [illegible]. We shall have the self-same bodies we [illegible] have; we shall be the self-same persons we now are. A resurrection implies

all this; for it is not a creation of new matter, and new bodies, but a restitution and re-genesis of the old. The laws of chemistry teach us that several essentially different liquids can be so intermixed as more or less to partake of one constituent and elemental body; and after such an admixtion, every single liquid can be separated, and yet retain its original quality or qualities. Now, if chemistry can accomplish all this, is it inconsistent to affirm that the world's Great Chemist can far more easily separate from other substances in which it may have been incorporated, the scattered dust of humanity, and re-construct it on a scale of beauty and splendour it did not possess even in its Edenic and primeval state? Surely, He who first created man, can re-organise his dead frame, though the particles of it may be scattered wide asunder as the poles, or driven before the blast like the chaff of the summer threshing-floor, or tossed on the billows, or buried in the depths of the blue ocean! "It is not incredible that God should raise the dead." We rest our faith and hope, without a single misgiving, on the matchless power and consummate wisdom of Jehovah, for the actuali-

zation of this magnificent and stupendous fact. It is our satisfaction that the Creator has pledged himself to raise the dead, and clothe these earthly tabernacles "with our house which is from heaven."

A class of pious thinkers assert, as another objection, that the resurrection body will be so vastly different and superior to what our bodies now are,—that its qualities will be so highly wrought, sublimated, and etherealized, it will therefore be utterly impossible to recognise it again. They attempt to found their objection on the lofty and inspired affirmations of the Apostle Paul:—"It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body." Now it is very evident from these sublimely-eloquent words that a great change awaits us all, but it is equally evident that that change will not so completely transform us that no trace of identification will afterwards remain, and be visible to our friends. It will be a change which will principally refer to the perfection of all our physical, and mental, and moral faculties, and

will therefore be felt "not so much in the outward form, as in the inward potence which will fill out and pervade the form with a new life." The irresistable law of "corruption" will be changed for the all-vital principle of "incorruption." No more coffins, and graves, and putrifying frames! The principle of a new and deathless life will pulsate in every nerve and faculty of the celestial organization. The "dishonour" and humiliation of original and actual sin will no longer cling to man "raised in glory." "Weakness" will nerve itself with the iron sinews of eternity, and without weariness serve God day and night in the courts of the heavenly temple. And the "natural" will invest itself with the "spiritual" and the infinite. Constituted as we now are, we are subject to the laws of the animal economy; are supported by sleeping, and eating, and exercise; and are endowed with organs of sense suited to the present mode of existence. But this is only the primal embodiment of humanity; like the chrysalis, it will emerge into a higher form of being,—"it is raised a spiritual body." It will remain a "body," for whatever may be the refining process through which it

will pass, it must of necessity retain its corporeal properties. But it will be subject to a spiritual economy: possessing a newly-constructed organization, it will dispense with eating and sleeping, and all other *et cætera* of its earthly being; so that whilst it will remain *a body*, it will live and act as *a spirit*, and is therefore appropriately styled by the inspired penman—"a spiritual body." "The immortality of the Gospel," says the philosophical Binney, "is not simply the immortality of the *soul*,—it is the immortality of *humanity*. It is *man* that is to live hereafter, and whose whole nature, so to speak, is to be perpetuated for ever. * * * The dead may not only live as disembodied spirits, but they are to live *again* as men." Time is the childhood of our being—eternity is its manhood. Death is not "nature's long vacation," it is the birth-moment of eternal life. It was such animating and glorious views as these which made the soul of the immortal Foster, like an imprisoned bird, to beat against the bars of its confinement, that it might obtain its freedom, and soar to its native element. "I congratulate you and myself," said he in writing to a friend, "that life is passing fast away.

What a superlatively grand and consoling idea is that of death! Without this radiant idea—this delightful morning star, indicating that the luminary of eternity is going to rise, life would, to my view, darken into midnight melancholy. Oh! the expectation of living *here*, and living *thus*, always, would be indeed a prospect of overwhelming despair. But thanks to that decree which dooms us to die—thanks to that Gospel which opens the vision of an endless life—and thanks, above all, to that Saviour-Friend who has promised to conduct all the faithful through the sacred trance of death into scenes of everlasting delight!"

* * * * "Death is the crown of life:
Were death denied, poor man would live in vain;
Were death denied, to live would not be life;
Were death denied, even fools would wish to die.
Death wounds to cure; we fall; we rise; we reign!
Spring from our fetters; fasten in the skies;
Where blooming Eden withers in our sight.
Death gives us more than was in Eden lost.
The King of Terrors is the Prince of Peace."

The material bodies of Enoch and Elijah are now in heaven, together with those of the saints who rose from the dead during the appaling tragedy of the crucifixion. And is not the *humanity* of the world's Redeemer in heaven

also?—that body which is the glorious pattern of the bodies of the saints, and which was "the firstfruits of them that slept?" Christ's resurrection body was material, and tangible to the senses. His disciples associated with him as before. And yet it possessed so much of the spiritual attribute, that he came into the room where they were assembled, with closed doors, for fear of the Jews, without opening any door, or making any noise! Christ's resurrection body, moreover, was *the same* after being changed from humiliation to a state of exaltation. It had evidently lost none of its peculiarity of feature or form, as unbelieving Thomas, without putting his finger into the print of the nails, and thrusting his hand into the open side, the moment he saw him, fell at his feet, exclaiming—"My Lord and my God!" The exanimate body, also, of Lazarus, whom Christ raised from the dead, though it had lain in the grave four days, and, in the warm climate of Judea, must have undergone a very material change, was, nevertheless, in all its peculiarity of form, brought forth from the grave's engaolment, so that Martha and Mary, and the Jewish mourners, knew him at once to

be the self-same Lazarus who had been laid by them in the dark sepulchre. And in all the astonishing displays of the miracle-working power of Christ, and every Bible-recorded instance of the resuscitation of exanimate bodies, the same identity of body was remarkably distinct. Now, if such has been invariably the case, why question personal identity at the general resurrection? and why doubt recognition in the world to come? Surely God's power will be as triumphant *then* as in past ages, as it is like his essence and character—"the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

We are prepared to admit that a striking change must have taken place on the humanity of Christ on its ascension from Bethany to everlasting glory; but that change affected not one single feature or characteristic of his person. It was the glorification of his humanity! It was the outbursting of the glory within him, the coruscations of which frequently streamed from his person prior to the crucifixion! The Transfiguration glory was resumed in greater splendour, and is retained for ever! Now, it is not so much like Christ's *resurrection body* that the bodies of the saints will be fashioned,

but "like unto his *glorious body*." "It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but this we know, that when he shall appear, WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM, for we shall see him as he is." In the resumption of the life of the body, and its immortal organization, every lineament of countenance, and peculiarity of person, which we now possess, will be retained, except those which are imperfect: and just as we now recognise our friends by some distinguishing characteristic, so in heaven—in the twinkling of an eye—in the self-same way, shall we know our departed ones from the myriad masses encircling the beatific throne. Eternity will not sweep away the sanctified sympathies and affections of this life, and bury them in her oblivious womb, as the ocean-tide sweeps away the autograph written on the sandy shore, leaving not a trace behind! The remembrance of our friends will not be as transient as our nightly visions! The lights of our households will not be lost in the dazzling splendour of eternal day! The bright sun may put out the lamps of the midnight sky, but "they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament for ever!"

Not a few are of the opinion—that little

children will not be found *as such* in heaven, It is asserted by those who have given attention to this interesting subject—that, not only will their mental faculties be finished in Paradise, but their bodies will also be perfected in size at the resurrection of the just. A poet of world-wide celebrity embodies this novel idea in the following exquisite lines:—

"In that great cloister's stillness and seclusion,
By guardian angels led,
Safe from temptation, safe from sin's pollution,
She lives, whom we call dead.

Not as a child shall we again behold her;
For when with raptures wild
In our embraces we again enfold her,
She will not be a child;—

But a fair maiden, in her Father's mansion,
Clothed with celestial grace;
And beautiful with all the soul's expansion
Shall we behold her face."

This theory is pleasing in poetry, but we think it is not sanctioned by Scripture. We readily admit the catholic expansion of mind of the blood-washed and glorified throng; nevertheless, we are of the firm opinion that "little children" will for ever remain, *in outward appearance*, as they were on earth. If there will

be—as many able writers state—striking distinctions of character, and temperament, and sex in heaven, why should there not also be "little children?" Some may reply—because their celestial organization, if not perfected in size at the resurrection, must for ever remain incomplete; and, as perfection is heaven's grand law, nothing that is in an unfinished state will be permitted to exist there. The perfection of heaven, we apprehend, will no more consist of a uniformity of size of person, than a uniformity of glory; and as there are degrees of blessedness, why not, also, degrees of size? The Sacred Oracles confirm our thesis, and confute the theory of the poet. The Redeemer chided his rude and unfeeling disciples because they rebuked certain Hebrew mothers who brought their little ones to receive his holy benediction; and, as his beaming eye fell on them, and he clasped them to his large and loving heart, he said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: *for of such is the kingdom of heaven.*" In this divine censure, the Saviour of the infant race teaches us—that the "*little children*" *of earth are* "*little children*" *in heaven*—that there they obtain the majo-

rity. There are a few biblical critics who have given a different and unnatural interpretation of this beautiful and consoling utterance; but the majority and the most judicious have adopted the literal acceptation, and their harmonious verdict is—that the holy language of Jesus proves that "departed infants make up the innumerable company that is now in glory," and "that of infants the kingdom of heaven is chiefly composed." St. Paul, speaking of the order and classification of the resurrection, says, that "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But *every man in his own order*." The literal translation is—*every human being in his own class*, the babe and the patriarch, young and old, male and female. In the graphic and thrilling description which St. John gives us in the Apocalypse of the universal assize, he states—"And I saw the dead, *small and great*, stand before God." It is here positively asserted—that there will be little ones, as well as adults, arraigned at the judgment bar, and that they will be distinguishable as such. Supposing, however, that in this opinion we are incorrect, and there will be no "little children" in outward appearance in

heaven, but that—as Longfellow has it—they will be perfected in person as well as mind, yet, this idea is not detrimental to our thesis of hereafter recognition; for, if there are changes in the present structure of humanity, as we pass on from one stage of our being to another, and we retain personal identity, then the same corporeal change may take place in heaven, and the exact lineament of feature, and contour of person, still be retained, by which we shall distinguish our departed "little children" the moment we cross the cold river of death, and "enter in through the gates into the city.'

CHAPTER III.

VOICES OF REASON AND AFFECTION.

"It cannot be—each hope, each fear,
That lights the eye, or clouds the brow,
Proclaims there is a happier sphere,
Than this bleak world that holds us now.

There is a voice which sorrow hears,
When heaviest weighs life's galling chain,
'Tis heaven that whispers—'Dry your tears,
The pure in heart shall meet again.'"

BEFORE a wise master-builder raises a structure, he first clears away everything which would impede the accomplishment of his purposes, and then lays the foundation, and proceeds with his plan. We have practised the same policy, and have done our best to remove those obstructions which would have retarded our progress in the satisfactory discussion of the delightful dogma of future recognition, which is truly and emphatically "the hope of the

bereaved." Now let us "arise and build" our thesis upon "a sure foundation," that, when the storm of bereaving sorrow beats upon our souls, we may outlive its fiercest blast, having built upon the "rock" of eternal truth, and not on the "sand" of man's shallow and dangerous reasoning.

If men would repose less confidence in what they falsely term philosophy, and regard more the instinctive yearnings and aspirations within them, we feel assured that few would be found disputing the precious verity we are attempting to defend and establish. To reason that such a hope is

"Like the baseless fabric of a vision,"

and must ultimately meet with a bitter disappointment, is to reason against the powerful voice and desire of nature. And we well know that when the trial has been made, and when the sceptical have stood beside the dying pillow of a dear friend, their cold and unnatural philosophy has been swept away by the impetuous and irresistable current of affection, and nature has borne away the palm in an earnest and tearful expression of the hope

of meeting again in a better and brighter world. Reason and nature are ever harmonious: it is only when fallible man attempts to sunder that which the all-wise Creator has joined together, that they appear antagonistic and contradictory. Men of profound minds and thinkings are, generally speaking, far less sceptical than those who have only a smattering of knowledge. They listen to the voice of nature, as well as to the voice of reason, and are saved from the entertainment of those absurdities which obtain amongst shallow-minded and would-be philosophers.

> "A small draught intoxicates the brain,
> But drinking largely sobers us again."

Now, we maintain that, as the doctrine in question has ever been the catholic belief and hope of humanity, such a fact is more than a presumptive argument in its favour, although Archbishop Whately has seen fit to reckon it of very little moment, because he says that heathen philosophers held it so very slightly; with which conclusion we beg leave to differ. Read their histories—read their prose writings —read their poetic compositions—and this pre-

cious dogma will meet your eye in almost every book they wrote. It has been believed and cherished, in some form or other, by all classes and tribes of people, except in one or two instances, in which they were found to be sunk into a state of brutality, and had lost all rational power. With these exceptions, the doctrine of future recognition was a prominent part of the world's theology. It was sung in the sublimest strains of classic poetry; it was pronounced clear and emphatic in the oration over the corpse of the departed; it cheered both the dying hour and the dead; and was the song of hope in the night of sorrow. And this, too, not only in Christian, but in Pagan countries, where the orb of divine truth had never shed its illuminating and cheering beams, and where the consolations of the Gospel had never been experienced. It was not a sentiment floating on the surface of the mind, and vacillating with every wind that blew, but a natural and hopeful desire of the heart, shining stronger and brighter, as outward circumstances darkened and clouded the spirit. But it was chiefly in the hour and article of death—when nature was falling into ruins—that it was

uttered with the confident expectation of a blessed and glorious reality. Men generally speak the truth, and unfold the secrets and aspirations of the soul, when eternity is dawning upon them, and the life-strings are snapping within them. The dying hour is not the time, and the dying chamber is not the place, for falsehood and deception. We reason, then, that such a catholic and world-wide hope cannot be a delusion, or a figment. To affirm that it is, is not only to insult the Creator, who has fashioned us as we are, and implanted within us such noble feelings, but to render death more repulsive to man than it is. In the beautiful language of an American divine:—"The loudest and strongest testimony to truth, next to the voice from heaven, is that which heaves up mightily from the broad bosom of humanity, like the voice of one lost in the wilderness, plaintive and tremulous, but hopeful still. When heaven speaks, earth returns the echo; and if we hear but the echo, we know what the voice spake, though it be less distinctly. The reflected heavens in the waters of earth preach of the heavens that are over them; and the stars that shine reflected out of their tossed and

restless waves would not be there if they were not first in the tranquil heavens above. So, what we hear sounding forth in a universal voice from the whole race of man, has been spoken to them from heaven, though in a voice so still, that only those who hold their breath in quiet can hear it. There be prophets in our inner life, as well as in our outer world!"

Heathen writers, whose only Bible was nature and reason, have repeatedly and emphatically expressed their faith and hope in the dogma of recognition after death; but the stupendous doctrine of the resurrection of the body was not comprehended or believed by them. They treated the idea with imperial contempt; and both Pliny and Celsus classed the resurrection of humanity with those impossibilities which defied the power and skill of the Creator, not knowing that to Omnipotence there can be no allowance or hindrance. They looked upon it as a detestable dogma, and regarded such a consummation as a great evil, and therefore resisted and wrote against it. Their conceptions were that the body was the clog and grave of the soul, and that it could only be happy when liberated from the

prison-house of mortality. It was their non-belief in the resurrection of the body which led to the popular practice of burning the dead; and it was their confident hope of mutual recognition and social enjoyment in the land of spirits which inspired many of the heathen to snap the thread of life, that they might there rejoin the departed. When Socrates was about to quaff the cup of poison which his judges had decided should be administered to him, he said—"If I did not think that I should arrive first among other gods both wise and good, and then among deceased men better than those here, I should be wrong in not complaining of death; but now you well know that I hope to attain the society of good men." "O illustrious day," exclaimed the eloquent Tully, "when I shall go to that divine council and assembly of minds!" Concerning disembodied spirits, Plato wrote that when they "arrive at their destination, they salute as old acquaintance, and enquire of one another's adventures." The future recognition, therefore, which pagan philosophers believed and taught, was a recognition in the "Elysian Fields" of the *spirits* and not of the *persons* of

the departed. We acknowledge that until the Everlasting Gospel "brought life and immortality to light" a thick and impenetrable veil of mystery and uncertainty hung over all the speculations and theories of men. But these pagan utterances are voices crying in the wilderness of humanity, and must not be regarded as irrelevant to the establishment of the doctrine which Christians of all denominations love to cherish, and in which they implicitly believe. Thank God! we have "a more sure word of prophecy" than Gentilism could possibly afford us. We have a revelation which is simple and explicit in its stupendous discoveries, and whose sublime and animating enunciations "give not forth an uncertain sound."

If in this imperfect estate we can well remember, even after the lapse of years, familiar faces and by-gone reminiscences, reason interrogates—why not also in heaven? If the eye can now distinguish the friend of the heart after a protracted period of separation, why not beyond the skies? If the memory, at a moment's notice, can bring to recollection—with the vividness and distinctness of yesterday—the voice, the gesture, and the lineaments, of a

long-lost bosom companion, why should not memory do all this in eternity? Nay more, why should not this powerful and retentive faculty accomplish greater things in the world to come, when freed from fettering influences, than it can possibly do in time? "Now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now we know in part; but then shall we know even as also we are known." In eternity the dark glass will be broken. The retina of vision will be bright and clear as the sun in his strength: the faculty of memory will be vigorous and perfect: and the heart will gush with a flood-tide of strong sympathies. In the future life, the human mind will be carried to the highest pitch of improvement, and in it alone will the human faculties develop their might, and find appropriate exercise. Standing on the "great and high" walls of the everlasting city, or at its pearl-flashing gates, the Christian will survey the circuitous route of the wilderness journey, in which he spent his "fourscore years and ten," and memory will recall the struggles made—the battles fought—the victories obtained—the salvations wrought out—and the blessings enjoyed. He will recollect every

tear he shed—every sigh he uttered—every friend he lost—every stumble he made. And such a retrospection—from such a commanding position, will excite his loud and heartfelt thanksgiving. No single recollection can be blotted out in heaven, no cord or bond, sanctified by divine grace, will be broken. The loving and eloquent author of "Personal Recollections," referring to the unfortunate death of her amiable brother, thus writes:—"He was to me what the natural sun was to the system. That holy band which the Lord has woven—that inestimable blessing of fraternal love and confidence—was never broken, never loosened between us, from the cradle to his grave, and God forbid I should say, or think, that the grave has broken it!" If there be the destruction and annihilation of any one faculty or sensibility we now possess, how can heaven be a perfect state? Shall we not have an augmentation rather than a decrease of every feeling and passion which is lovely, and pure, and Christ-like? "I may affirm," says the pious Drelincourt, "for an infallible truth, that the glory of heaven, as well as grace, shall bring nature to perfection, but shall not destroy it.

It shall add to it other excellences, but it shall not take away those it hath already. It shall not abolish any of the faculties, but it shall beautify and enrich them with new ornaments. Therefore, consequently, it shall not take away our memory, which is one of the rarest gifts and abilities of the reasonable soul." The ancients believed that true friendship was a kind of union which existed for ever. Christianity sanctifies it, and stamps it with the approval of God, and invests it with the attributes of immortality. Those warm affections of the heart which Charlotte Elizabeth reckoned among the sweetest relics of a lost Eden, will survive the dissolution of the body, and flourish in vigour and beauty in the Paradise of God. With what a moral and unspeakeable grandeur does this cheering fact invest true and sanctified friendship! It is true that whilst death breaks no holy tie, he separates friends; but does he not unite them again? He removes many whom we love; but does he not ultimately remove us that we may join them?

If the three highly-privileged disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration knew Moses and Elias, whom they had never before seen, is it

not reasonable, therefore, to suppose, apart from every scriptural affirmation, that they will know each other in heaven? We cannot think of heaven as a place and state of perfect consciousness, and perfect cognition, and perfect felicity, without at the same time embracing in our minds the soul-animating verity of a re-union and recognition with those departed ones who are "made perfect," and who, from their exalted and burning thrones in glory, are beckoning us to "come up higher." A dying saint was once asked by a much-loved friend—"Shall we know one another in heaven?" To which he replied, "Do you think there will be more folly in heaven than upon earth? With all our want of wisdom and knowledge, we are acquainted with each other here, and do you suppose this knowledge will be diminished when we reach the realms of light?" This was reasoning at once solid, and convincing, and scriptural. The saintly Richard Baxter, in his Saint's Everlasting Rest, says:—"There shall no knowledge be wanting which now we have, but only that which implieth imperfection; and what imperfection can this imply? To know one another as well in the glorified estate as we did in the

state of mortality, and better. The good of this blessed state consisteth in the knowledge one of another, communion with one another, and mutual content in that knowledge and communion." To entertain a different opinion is to acknowledge that there will be an abridgment, instead of the completion, of the faculty of memory—a felt want in the mental capacity of the glorified—a defectiveness of cognition anything but consonant and harmonious with the perfection of heaven.

For a while we have listened with satisfaction to the convincing voice of reason, and have been strengthened in the holy assurance that if memory cannot be annihilated, and must exist and be perfected in heaven, and if there will be—as the Scriptures affirm—a resurrection of the identical bodies which we now possess then, independent of every other argument, our thesis is established beyond successful contradiction. But let us listen, also, to the sweet and hallowed utterances of the voice of affection which "giveth us songs in the night" of bereavement and death; and we shall learn that such a hope is the spontaneous and deep utterance of nature, groaning painfully, but hope-

fully, for her final consummation, and longing earnestly for her future rest. "I shall go to them," says affection, with a bright tear-drop trembling in her heaven-directed eye, "but they shall not return to me." The armorial escutcheon hung over the hall-door, tacitly proclaiming the exit of an inhabitant—the flaxen or silver hair wreathed in the locket, the only fragment of the loved saved from the jaws of the grave—the well-bound books on the library shelf, now no longer read, the fire of the bright and flashing eye that swept over their pages having been put out and shrouded in midnight darkness—the finished and now dearly-prized painting, which seems like a struggle with death to preserve the departed, and which so often brings them to the recollection of the living, all awaken deep emotion in the bereaved heart. But these relics and memorials are not regarded with feelings of despair, but are treasured up in memory of the sainted dead, and of a fellowship which the grim tyrant has failed to dissever. The flowers have faded, but their fragrance still remains. We have not the *personal presence* of the dead, but who can truthfully affirm that we have not

their *spiritual presence?* Affection hopes and believes we have. Their complacent looks their winning smiles—their sweet voices are, still seen, and heard, and felt. In the dreams of the night their angel forms float before the spirit's sleepless vision; and in the light of day the sheen of their blissful smile seems to brighten every terrestrial object, and every dark hour. And thus we hold mysterious converse with the dead, and feel more intensely how indissoluble and inseparable are the ties that bind and unite us to them. Life is made solemnly serious, and its rough waters are tranquilized by the presence of the unseen; and even death is robbed of one-half of its loneliness and terror by the invisible presence of those who have passed over Jordan before us.

"We sometimes deem their pleasant smiles
Still on us sweetly fall,
Their tones of love we faintly hear
Our name in sadness call.

We know that they are happy,
With their angel plumage on;
But our hearts are very desolate,
To think that they are gone."

It is a consoling idea that the spirits of departed friends are permitted to act the part of guar-

dian angels to the living, to minister to them, and to stretch over them their golden and sheltering pinions in this region of danger and death!

Who has not been struck with amazement and awe at the mysterious entertainment of the same thoughts and subjects which have been occupying at the same time the mind of his companion? How can we account for this strange and oft-repeated coincidence, but on the simple grounds of a mysterious union and converse of spirit with spirit, of which we were not then aware? Such a fact proves the perfect independence of mind over matter—of spirit over nature. Why, then, may not the emancipated spirit still hold mysterious and invisible converse with the living? Nay, more, why may not that mysterious and invisible communication be more frequent and real? Milton says that disembodied spirits crowd the pathways of life. Were the blinding scales off our eyes, like the youth by the side of the ancient prophet, we should see ourselves surrounded by groups and masses of holy beings, shielding and guiding us to heaven! But the nearest, and the most watchful, would be found

to be the spirits of departed friends! This is more than a poet's dream.

To those who deny the doctrine of a future recognition, affection thus addresses herself:—What if these scattered links are never gathered up and re-united that they cannot be broken! What if the swelling waves of the Jordan of death break not on the strand of an eternal shore! What if there is no life of pleasure and bliss beyond the confines of this vale of tears! What if the unfathomable and mysterious future has no bright and cheering bow spanning its profound surface! Then life is a splendid deception! hope an *ignis fatuus!* and the heart a blasted thing! Remove *this hope*, and you make the dying pillow a thousand-fold more awful and repulsive than it is! You throw the pall of night over the dying hour and the dead! You dash away from the lips of the yielding sufferer, and his agonised friends, the sweet chalice of consolation! Instead of decking the tomb with the lovely flowers of Paradise, you wreath round it the dark cypress of despair! Tell us that it is a terrible thing to die—to part with our friends—to pass away into the land of silence. Array these sombre facts

in all the awful drapery, and paint them in all the thrilling language which the prolific mind can conceive, and the eloquent tongue express: but leave us uninjured, untouched, and free, the blessed hope of meeting and knowing each other again beyond the skies! Bereft of this heavenly anticipation, this world would be a lone and arid desert! The long dreaded hour of separation would exhaust all terrestrial comfort, and, like a canker-worm, would eat away the vitals of human happiness! Earth would be a Bochim of tears; and every bereaved mother would be a comfortless Rachel! Even with the possession of this celestial hope, it is vastly more than affection can bear to be a spectator of the agonies and exodus of the object of its fondest desire. Who then can tell what the misery and despair of the dying hour would be uncheered by it? Where is the plumb-line that could fathom the desolate condition of the bereaved, if there was no hope beyond the tomb? Would not the parentless child feel its orphanage far more intensely? Would not the lone widow weep herself speedily into the grave of her husband? How often the bereaved visit "God's Acre," and walk among the tombs,

—not to shed the tears of despair, but to baptize the green sod with the tears of hope! "She goeth to the grave to weep there." It is a mournful pleasure to frequent "the place of skulls," to shed *such tears*—nature's most eloquent epitaph and her highest tribute to departed worth, far more expressive than the chastely-written memoir, or the carved panegyric on the polished marble! Who would not covet such posthumous desert? Hope, angel-like, wipes away the falling tears of sanctified affection, and whispers—"sorrow not even as others," for the holy dead "sleep in Jesus." "I shall go to him," exclaimed the weeping Israelitish king as he stood by the stiff and cold corse of his dead son! "I shall go to him," exults the mourning widow as she reluctantly leaves the reposing place of her sleeping husband, and as—

"A light from far illumes her face—a light
That comes beyond the moon—beyond the sun—
The light of truth divine, the glorious hope
Of resurrection at the promised morn,
And meetings then which ne'er shall part again!"

"I shall go to him," is the holy utterance of believing parents as, with the internal eye, they

behold their offspring—not a lost child—but a transplanted flower in God's Eden! Thus the gall and the wormwood are sweetened by the cordial of faith and hope, and heaven becomes stronger and more irresistible in its celestial and attractive power.

Like the blessed Redeemer, our departed ones have "ascended up on high"—the clouds have received them out of sight. The destructible part descended into the grave, which has been sanctified by the brief residence of the Lord of Life, but the indestructible ascended up to heaven, from whence it originally came. They have left a trial of glory behind them which, like the stern light of a ship, irradiates the upward course along which they swept. Disciple-like, we are gazing up towards their exalted and glorious destination. God has taken them to his bosom; and there they lean and repose without a care, and without a fear. "Oh that we had wings like a dove! for then would we fly away, and be at rest!"

"Oh, happy world! oh, glorious place!
Where all who are forgiven
Shall find their loved and lost below,
And hearts, like meeting streams, shall flow
For ever one—in heaven."

CHAPTER IV.

SCRIPTURAL CONFIRMATIONS.

"Such words have power to quell
The restless pulse of care,
And come like the benediction
That follows after prayer.

Thus the night shall be filled with music,
And the cares that conceal the day,
Shall fold their tents like the Arabs,
And as silently steal away."

THERE are many vastly interesting truths which do not appear on the pages of Scripture with such prominence and distinctness as others which may truly be considered of a more essential and vital character, and yet concerning which there can be no reasonable and justifiable ground of disbelief. The doctrine of the Trinity, together with recognition in heaven, is not so fully stated as the truths of "the common salvation." And yet, there are many who firmly

believe in the former, who reject the latter, whilst each seems to be equally peremptory in the Word of God. There are many stars in the midnight sky which, not being near our earth, shine not so brilliant to us as those which are; and there are many truths which, because they are not so distinctly revealed as others, are not so clear to the eye of our understanding; and yet to deny them is far more inconsistent than to affirm that there are no stars in the spangled heavens save those which are near our planet. We are not left to fluctuant conjecture on the dogma of recognition in heaven. Human ingenuity and fancy need not to be put forth to invent and popularize such a precious truth; it is patent on the fair page of the Book of Life. And although everything on the subject is not made known, yet enough is revealed to excite our spirits, to strengthen and console our hearts, and to kindle our highest desires. The Bible has "brought life and immortality to light." We therefore appeal to it as the standard of infallible truth; and we are content to have our thesis tested thoroughly by its holy and inspired statements. If its teachings refute and condemn it, precious

as it is, we will abandon it, and adopt the comfortless theory of the non-recognitionist; but if the dogma of heavenly recognition receives divine confirmation from the Bible, then we will hide it in our hearts, and cherish it for ever, in opposition to the sophistry of men and the conclusions of so-called philosophy.

There are two ways in which the Sacred Oracles teach this consoling verity to bereaved humanity: they do so by invariably representing the heavenly state in a social character, from which we gather the palpable inference of mutual recognition; and also by direct and positive affirmation.

The Creator has endowed man with a social nature, and has fitted him for social enjoyment. When the father of the human family was placed among the beauties of Paradise, God said, "It is not good for man to be alone;" and a meet companion was at once provided for him. And though man is now in a fallen condition, the principle of his social nature remains the same: he must associate with congenial spirits to be happy. Place him in solitude, and he would naturally pine away and die. Now, there is nothing on earth more

beautiful and attractive than the sanctified order and happiness of the social life. Such a manifestation was seen by the Saviour in the humble and pious family of Bethany; and thither would he oft retire from the din and dust of the Hebrew metropolis to rest awhile his exhausted frame, and seek tranquillity for his dispirited heart. His observant eye saw there earthly developments of the heavenly condition: that humble home was a type and foreshadow of the celestial state. The piety of Lazarus, and his two devoted sisters, was unostentatious and sincere; there was, therefore, a sacred congeniality between the family and himself which was most refreshing to the spirit of the God-man, after encountering the repulsive looks, and submitting to the rude sarcasms, of the rulers and heads of the Jewish people. To him the family and home of Bethany was Paradise in miniature! Now, whatever is truly lovely in the heart and the life will never die, but will receive its glorious consummation in that happy and holy world from whence all that is excellent originally came. We shall carry neither our gold, nor our estates, nor our titles, nor our poverty, nor our rags, with us

to heaven; but we shall our emotions, and sympathies, and piety; and, doubtless, shall be surprised to find the social aspects of the hereafter state much like "the life that now is."

Many and gorgeous are the representations of heaven in the Bible, both as it regards what may be styled its physical glories, and the state of bliss into which they will be ushered "who have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." It is described as the Paradise of God, in which the tree of life flourishes, and through which the river of life rolls, on whose banks flowers and fruit bloom in perennial verdancy, and on which "the ransomed of the Lord" shall feast their spiritual appetites and tastes through one everlasting and ever-brightening summer! No serpent will be permitted to trail over its fragrant and fadeless flowers—no evil enter within its holy enclosure. "And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." Its blest inhabitants "shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the

Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." It is delineated as a city of surpassing splendour—the new Jerusalem, ever radiant with glory, garrisoned by a wall of jasper great and high, having gates of pearl, and its streets paved with "pure gold, as it were transparent glass!" Thrones, and diadems, and sceptres, and palms of victory, and kingly and sacredotal vestments, are its ordinary glories, on whose beaming lustre the shades of evening will never set. "And there shall be no night there!" It is spoken of as "the inheritance of the saints in light," which is "incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away:"—a blood-purchased—a God-bequeathed, and an everlasting possession! Then, again, as "a delightsome land," where the perfected faculties of the mind will find infinite scope for their untiring effort in exploring the striking wonders of its celestial and everlasting home, the mysteries of Providence, and the still more stupendous wonders and mysteries of redemption; and where the new and apposite organization will develop the might of its

untiring energies in the service and songs of the skies! It is also described as the upper temple which was prefigured by the beautiful structure which the illustrious King Solomon built on Mount Zion, and garnished with all the artistic and physical splendour of his own and foreign lands—a temple in which the harmonious sounds of golden harps and angel voices will everlastingly re-echo; where the anthems of salvation will be ceaselessly chanted by the "great multitude which no man can number;" and where the moments of redeeming love and mercy shine brighter than the brightest constellation of the firmament! Jesus Christ, with majestic simplicity, styled it his "Father's house," in which there "are many mansions" awaiting faithful and triumphant discipleship, and which will ultimately be possessed by them as their "everlasting habitations;" and, as an assurance of such a glorious realization, he left earth for heaven to prepare their future home, and greet them on its threshold with the welcome of an "elder brother!" He also spoke of it as the rendezvous of a convivial and festal gathering, when the "elect from the *four* winds" will sit down with Abraham, Isaac,

and Jacob, and all the holy patriarchs and prophets whose names are "as familiar as household words;" when "the marriage supper of the Lamb" will be celebrated amid the rapturous symphonies of "the harpers on their harps;" and when Christ himself will drink the new wine in his Father's kingdom to which he made reference at the end of the Paschal Feast!

Now, in all these majestic representations and apocalyptic delineations of heaven, the social character and state is not in any single instance lost sight of, but made to appear so palpable that "he who runs may read." And hence, therefore, we come to the irresistable conclusion that if there be the establishment and perpetuation of the social economy in heaven, as the descriptions decide to which we have briefly referred, then mutual recognition follows as a matter of absolute necessity. The most conclusive representation in the whole Scriptures from which we draw the strongest inference of mutual recognition, is, perhaps, the latter, which we have quoted as the sublime description of the Great Teacher. In that animating representation Christ teaches us that Christians will recognise their friends, and be

recognised by them, as certainly as the festal gathering will take place. If such will not be the case, and if the guests at the heavenly board will not know each other, we hesitate not to say that this attractive and striking utterance will be incomplete, and be shorn of its chief power and beauty. If the passage signifies anything, it means that the patriarchs and prophets will know each other at the celestial feast, and that those who are privileged to sit down with them, will also know them, and form their acquaintance. "A society," says the poet Cowper, "without social intercourse, seems to be a solecism and a contradiction in terms." We surely shall not sit down with such illustrious and distinguished worthies in "the Kingdom of God," and not know them! The amiable wife of Conrad Cotta little thought that the young and intelligent-looking flute-player, whom she befriended and helped, and who sat down at her humble board, was the bright star of the Reformation! Here, we may sit down with illustrious guests, and not be aware of the fact: some of God's saints, in patriarchal times, entertained angels unawares. But this, in the very nature of things, cannot

take place in heaven, because of the perfection of the glorified estate, and that completeness of knowledge which will be possessed by the ransomed spirit. It cannot be that we shall rise together—be glorified together—dwell together for ever—and feast together at "the marriage supper of the Lamb," and form no association and no intimacy! And if we form an intimacy at all—as it is certain we shall—is it natural to suppose that our departed friends will be altogether lost sight of? Some there are who firmly believe in recognition in heaven, but they question the *individual and personal recognition of those we knew and loved on earth.* They believe that we shall see and know such distinguished characters as Enoch, and Abraham, and Moses, and Elijah, and Paul; but they doubt as to the recognition of husbands and wives, parents and children, pastors and people. Now, if there be recognition in *any* sense, it must be in *every* sense; if in the *general*, it must be in the *particular* also; for heaven—as we have already shown in the previous chapter—is a place and state of perfection, and therefore knowledge, as well as happiness, must be perfect. It is true, the brightest stars in the mid-

night sky are the most conspicuous, but their brightness does not prevent our seeing those which are less brilliant. And though in heaven "one star differeth from another star in glory," and such worthies as the patriarchs and prophets will blaze forth in lustrous splendour, yet the lowly and sincere saint, whose only dwelling might have been a garret or a cellar, of whose history the world knew little, and cared less, and of whose life it was not worthy, shall shine as the stars of the firmament! When the saintly conjugation meets (blessed thought!) Christians of separate sects will forget their denominational differences, and the prayer of the Church's Redeemer will be fully and gloriously actualized—"That they all may be one, even as thou, Father, and I are one." No more sharp contentions about theological creeds! no more shyness and pride! "Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim." No more boasting—"I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ." All will then feel and think alike. The "evangelical alliance" will be realised only in heaven. A sacred bond of love will enclasp and begirdle the celestial brotherhood of saints

—one holy pulsation throb in every heart; and Christ will be all in all! Even so, Lord Jesus!

Heaven is our eternal home! This is its most attractive and endearing aspect. What would it be to us was it not so? It might be a gorgeous city—a glorious kingdom—a deathless and nightless region—a delightsome land—but what would all its pleasantness and glory avail us, if it was not a family and an eternal home? Were it otherwise, its beauty and splendour would only dazzle and agonize us! Place one of the humble sons of earth amid the glare and pomp of a royal court; and if he did not feel at home, its very pageantry would make him more miserable than he was before, and he would sigh for his former life, though it was associated with the lowliest forms and stations of humanity. True happiness is not chained to kingly thrones, nor wrapt in imperial vestments, nor is it confined to royal courts and palaces. It is like the glorious sunshine which sheds its warm and life-giving beams as freely on the cottage of the peasant, as on the mansion of the nobleman—on the garden of the poor man, as on the broad acres of the rich man. It is a blessing independent of every circumstantial

condition of earth; and, perhaps, is more frequently found in the possession of the unnoticed and despised plebian, whilst he who wears the princely tiara on his high brow, and is the most envied amongst mortals, laments its absence from his heart.

Now, whether we regard heaven as the grand temple of the catholic church;—or as the rendezvous of "the sacramental host of God's elect;"—or as the general festal gathering of triumphant saintship;—or as the house of our heavenly Father;—does not each beautiful delineation, by irresistable and all-convincing implication, assure us, with the strength of a direct and emphatic enunciation, that there is recognition in the region of light and joy? Unquestionably, heaven is so often described as partaking so largely and completely of the social character and element, to impart to the children of men this soul-animating and all-sustaining conviction.

But this glorious verity is not only taught us by the unmistakable implications of Scripture, but also, as we conceive, by direct and positive affirmation. "But when David saw that his servants whispered, David perceived that the

child was dead: therefore David said unto his servants, Is the child dead? And they said, He is dead. Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed *himself*, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the Lord, and worshipped: then he came to his own house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat. Then said his servants unto him, What thing *is* this that thou hast done? thou didst fast and weep for the child, *while it was* alive; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread. And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell *whether* God will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I SHALL GO TO HIM, but he shall not return to me."—2 SAM. XII C. 19—23 V. Now many might be disposed to reason, that all the bereaved sire meant was—that he should ultimately meet with the like unavoidable fate, and be borne to the same dark sepulchre where the corrupting body of his infant would be deposited. I will not take it upon me to affirm that this sombre idea was not involved in the expressive and

sanguine utterance of the royal monarch. But was nothing more involved? Nay, was not recognition in heaven most certainly and distinctly enunciated? Any other view is unnatural and forced, and would make David appear to be a stoic rather than a Christian. Is there anything consolatory in the melancholy reflection that one day—and that too not far distant—the mourning father would himself be forced into the same tomb? Is there anything friendly-looking in the cold and repulsive visage of death to cause mortality to welcome his approaching and noiseless footfall? When he stalks uninvited into the family circle, and breathes his chilly and blasting breath upon the loveliest flowers of humanity, that they droop and die, is there aught in such a sad catastrophe to excite a fond father to act as did David?—in opposition to Hebrew custom, to rise from the mourning attitude the moment he knew the worst—to wash his face—to adorn his person, and go to the temple to worship the Lord God, dispensing at once with the popular ceremonies and rites due from the living to the dead, whilst the dead lay un*coffined* and unburied in his palace, especially

when we consider the sinful cause of the bereaving stroke? No! away for ever with such an unnatural and chilling conclusion! Our God-implanted instincts negative such a warped and cruel interpretation! Death is a most repulsive and unnatural thing. It is not as the Poet has styled it—"the debt of nature;" nor as Jeremy Taylor has supposed it—the preordination of the Creator: IT IS THE CURSE OF SIN. God made man to live for ever; sin cursed him to death! The exquisite framework of the human system was originally immortal. Immortality was man's primal inheritance —man's Edenic birthright. The "harp of thousand strings" was tuned for everlasting harmony! Sin broke up the melody, unstrung the harp, and rendered discordant the primeval anthem! Death is, therefore, eminently unnatural and forbidding.

"For that, even to the best, the wise, and pure, and pious,
Death, repulsive king! thine iron rule is terrible;
And cold and lonely, thy frigid face is hateful:
The bravest look on thee with dread, the humblest curse thy coming."

Even the Christian believer trembles when he contemplates death prospectively, and, with

solemn emphasis, asks, "what shall I do in the swellings of Jordan?" It is true that sometimes crushed with sorrow, or rapturized with a bright and blissful prospect of "the inheritance of the saints in light," he oft exclaims—"I would not live alway!" but whilst he desires the goodly land beyond the Jordan, he does not desire death. "We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened, *not for that we would be unclothed,* but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." It is evident, therefore, that the saint does not wish for death *as death,*—that would be unnatural—but for the grand and glorious sequel of an immortal life. We may have kind friends and affectionate children residing in a far-off country, and may long to be with them, and again enjoy their society and friendship, but we fear to cross the mighty waters rolling between us and them. So we long for immortality and incorruption, but fear to die—to launch out on the dark ocean of eternity—to breast the swelling and turbid waves of Jordan —to grasp the coveted boon of a new, and higher, and better existence. We are awaiting the fiery ordeal with instinctive dread.

Some have affirmed that David comforted himself with the hope of going to the same glorious place to which the emancipated spirit of his child had safely arrived. This is true; but it is not the whole truth. If he meant no more than this, why did he not express himself in corresponding terms? He possessed the same faith as his pious forefathers. He believed that life was a journey, that death—come when it may—was the end of that journey, and that then the disembodied spirit was gathered to its living fathers, and mingled in the company of its sainted ancestors. Had the tomb been the boundary-line of his hope, it is natural to suppose he would have wept on, and mourned on, and fasted on. But it was not. He believed in the immortality of the soul. He believed, too, as firmly in the salvation of the infant race. *Nature* looking *into* the dark and silent tomb, might tremblingly exclaim:—"I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." But *faith* looked *through* the tomb, far beyond corruption and worms, and her bright and piercing eye saw—amid the thousands and myriads pacing the golden streets of the New Jerusalem—the emancipated spirit of the child

whose cold and stiff carcase yet lay in the royal palace awaiting funeral exequies:—her ear heard its loud hallelujah blending with the transporting symphonies of the harps and songs of heaven! This was faith's apocalypse. No wonder that the horn of hope was brimming full of blissful anticipation of re-union and recognition in heaven; nor that such a comforting assurance crystalized the scalding tears of bereaved sorrow into celestial dew-drops, which were fragrant with consolation as the full rose of summer, and refreshing as the gentle showers of spring! The Holy Spirit, therefore, through the lips of the royal monarch of Israel, proclaims the precious verity of re-union and recognition in heaven.

Another Scriptural confirmation is contained in the sixteenth chapter of St. Luke's Gospel, and is taught us by the Great Teacher:—"And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom."—v. 22 and 23. Now, granting *as* some have imagined—that this is not a real

history, but a parabolic illustration, does not the Saviour teach us—amongst many vastly important and thrilling facts—that the spirits of the departed, whether sanctified or not, will retain the consciousness of the lives spent on earth, and their recollection of those they knew, and that they will recognise them again in the future state? Nay, more, that the extremely painful agonies of the lost will be increased by such recognition, whilst on the part of the saved it will be calculated to excite their joys? The believer will see what a hell he has shunned, and the unbeliever what a heaven he has lost. The Saviour confirms this view by another of those sublimely-awful utterances which he made to the unbelieving Jews:—"There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out." Burkitt says that it is probable the blessed will see the torments of the lost, and the lost the glory of the blessed. But let us turn to the bright side of this awfully dark picture, and draw from it an important and resistless conclusion. If it is absolutely certain

that such a recognition will take place between departed spirits whose everlasting abodes are the antipodes of each other, then it is far more certain that they will know each other in heaven who have taken "sweet counsel together" on earth—who have prayed, and watched and fought, and conquered together "through Him that hath loved them," and whose eternal home is in their Father's house above. Disbelieve this grand verity, and you rob this parable—if it be a parable—of one of its brightest gems of truth; you make the Saviour a fabler; you brand the divine teaching as a fallacious doctrine.

How clear and emphatic are the numerous declarations of St. Paul on this delightful subject! In his epistles to the churches he affirms and re-affirms, the doctrine of recognition in heaven. "For now we see through a glass, darkly; BUT THEN FACE TO FACE: NOW I know in part; BUT THEN SHALL I KNOW EVEN AS ALSO I AM KNOWN."—1 COR. XIII c. 12 v. Knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise us up also by Jesus, AND SHALL PRESENT US WITH YOU."—2 COR. IV c. 14 v. "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoice

ing? ARE NOT EVEN YE IN THE PRESENCE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST AT HIS COMING?"—1 THES. II c. 19 v. "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, AND BY OUR GATHERING TOGETHER UNTO HIM."—2 THES. II c. 1 v. These are only a few passages out of the many apostolic affirmations which we have quoted as scriptural confirmations on this subject. Now if they do not emphatically and distinctly teach—beyond the shadow of a doubt—recognition in heaven, they teach nothing. The well-founded hope of the hardy and illustrious Apostle, which animated and cheered him on "in labours more abundant," was—that the Corinthian and Thessalonian converts would be recognisable by him, and he by them, in the day of consummated redemption, and that their final salvation would be the foundation of no ordinary joy to his spirit at the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. But how could such be the source of his celestial exultation, if he had not a personal acquaintance with the glorious reality? Such was indispensable to create his "joy, or crown of rejoicing." It is true that the mere knowledge of their eternal

safety would form a matter of spiritual triumph to the glorified champion of Christianity; but, in the verses quoted, he most distinctly avers that the crown—the cardinal—the highest of his rejoicing, next to being in the immediate presence of Christ, would consist in being able to distinguish *his converts* from all others in that august and vast assemblage "which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues," encircling the exalted and dazzling throne of the Lamb. If the spiritual father will recognise his spiritual children, will they not also be able to recognise him? The learned Dr. Macknight says that "the manner in which the Apostle speaks of the Thessalonians, shows that he expected to know his converts at the day of judgment. If so, we may hope to know our relations and friends then." At the general gathering together unto Christ, that animating passage of Inspiration will be realized in its highest and sublimest acceptation, when every devoted minister who has gone "forth and weeping, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." And every Christian parent will pre-

sent his redeemed and sanctified ones, exclaiming—"Behold I and the children whom the Lord hath given me!" Who can give even a faint idea of the joyful bliss of that presentation-hour, when as churches and families we shall be admitted into the everlasting joy of our Lord; and when they who have oft supplicated the Fountain of Mercy for each other's eternal welfare, and as oft feared concerning its final issue, have triumphed over the world, the flesh, and the devil, and met and congratulated each other where sin, and sorrow, and parting is unknown! There is nothing more stimulating to the arduous and sacred enterprize of the devoted servant of Jesus, next to his Master's smile of approbation, than to be made the honoured instrument of the conversion of immortal and blood-bought souls, and to behold his spiritual family "walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." Who, then, can wonder that they should be his "joy, and crown of rejoicing," at the resurrection of the just? The Christian parent has joy at the birth of his offspring; but a deeper tide of satisfaction rolls over his spirit when they are "born again." What

then must be his rapture when he welcomes them into the heavenly mansion! Dr. Doddridge observes that "it is for no language but that of heaven to describe the sacred joy which such a meeting must occasion." When the battle of life is over, and the victory won—when the thorny wilderness is traversed, and Canaan gained—when the celestial throne is reached, and the crown of righteousness obtained, O! how sublime and glorious will be the thanksgiving-song of parents and pastors, as it rolls along the vaulted arches and domes of heaven's high and holy sanctuary, which John—"the poet-prophet of the Christian Church"—says will be "as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder," and yet softer and sweeter than the thrilling harmonies of an Eolian harp, swept over by the gentle zephyrs of summer!

CHAPTER V.

CONSOLATION FOR THE BEREAVED.

"Oh, blissful scene! where severed hearts
Renew the ties most cherish'd;
Where nought the mourn'd and mourner parts;
Where grief with life is perish'd.
Oh! nought do I desire so well,
As here to die, and there to dwell!"

THE Bible is eminently a book of consolation. He who is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities," has accommodated it to meet the state of humanity in all its sunshine and shadow; and hence every sorrow is assuaged, and every distress ameliorated, by that kind of consolation which it is alone the peculiar and distinct province of the Scriptures to afford. There is a gracious promise for every trying hour—a covenant bow cast over every dark cloud—a healing balm for every broken heart

—a celestial cordial for every disquieted spirit. He who knows how to temper the fierce blast to the shorn lamb, and who "stays his rough wind in the day of his east wind," has graciously added promise to promise, comfort to comfort, in such exuberant abundance, that the tearful eye cannot turn to one of its fair pages without meeting with something to calm and console the heart. But the blessed promises of the Bible are comparatively uninteresting to those who are living in the sunshine and joy of life, because they have not been placed in those straits and circumstances in which alone these holy pledges are appreciated and felt. The more the heart is pierced with sorrow, the better will it understand the teaching of the Bible, and feel the force, and see the beauty, of its "exceeding great and precious promises." The pitchy darkness brings out more clearly the number and brightness of the stars of the midnight sky; and the times of bereaving sorrow reveal to the eye of faith the numberless and heart-supporting pledges which a covenant-keeping God has given to "the sons and daughters of affliction." They hear voices then *which* could not be heard in the din and stir of

the broad day; and they learn lessons of heavenly wisdom in the shade they never would have done in the sunshine. The best and holiest lessons are not taught in prosperity, or in pride, or in health; but in adversity, in sickness, and in death. The heart is then soft like wax, and will take best the impressure of the divine image; and the mind is most open to receive and benefit by heavenly instruction. And, then, trials give new energy to prayer, and extract from the promises of God the aroma of Paradise. Every new affliction, too, is a fresh proof of a Father's love—"for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." If the strokes of divine chastisement are heavy, God gives correspondent support: if He smites with one hand, He also holds up with the other. The Christian's life, therefore, is a life of discipline, and his religion full of hope and consolation. Listen to the blessed comfortings and stupendous revelations with which God—through the medium of Inspired Truth—seeks to animate and cheer the sorrowing hearts of His afflicte people:—"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others

which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."—1 THES. IV c. 13—18 v.

The Bible is the catholicon of the bereaved heart. It pours in upon the distressed spirit a flood-tide of the richest consolation, because it sanctions the faith we love to cherish, and chants over the consecrated tomb the requiem of immortality. In its own peculiar and God-like way it assures us that hope is not to be entombed in the cold and silent sepulchre; and speaks of separations only as temporary, not *eternal*; and of meetings again where partings

are unknown! O blessed book! earth would be dark without thy bright and celestial beams, and life would indeed be cheerless and cold without thy precious comfortings!

It has been a popular custom amongst the African race to visit the sandy graves of their children and friends, and carry rice-cake, pomegranates, and cocoa nuts, and leave them there, thinking it possible that the lowly sleeper might awake, and be hungry. Mothers have been known, for many years, to pay annual visits to the graves of their darling children, and, in maternal agony, to spread out the rich repast, and invoke the Pagan gods to give them back their lost ones. They knew nothing of the stupendous and glorious verities of Inspiration, or the rushing tide of their bereaved agony would have been stemmed by them, the bleeding wounds of their smitten hearts would have been staunched, and their tear-wet spirits stayed with the celestial hope of immortality and life beyond the grave. But we are taught that the pious dead "sleep in Jesus;" that there is a sun-lit side to the tomb; and that it is not as a cruel and vaunting scepticism would have it—the dark prison-house of annihilation

and despair; it is simply a resting-place for the weary sojourner—a sleeping-place for the holy dead. The voice of the risen Christ sweeps through the quiet chambers of the grave, stirring the dust of its myriad sleepers,—"I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." "I SHALL NOT SEE DEATH," said a dying lady, "I SHALL BE SURPRISED INTO GLORY!" Transcendent idea! but not more transcendent than true; for the Lord of Life enunciated the same glorious fact in the mournful habitation of the weeping family of Bethany.

"We see but dimly thro' the mists and vapours,
Amid these earthly damps;
What seems to us but sad funereal tapers,
May be heaven's distant lamps.

There is no death! What seems so is transition;
This life of mortal breath
Is but the suburb of the life elysian,
Whose portal we call death."

And, yet, knowing as we do that death is but the beginning of a higher form of life, how many Christians there are who mourn over their de*parted* friends as though death had for ever en-

gaoled them in the tomb, and as though they would never see and embrace them again where there is no "more pain," and no "more death." It is right to weep with a Christ-like sorrow over their dying pillows and green graves; but excessive grief, such as the heathen manifested who had no well-grounded hope of a resurrection to life, is exceedingly sinful and displeasing to a chastening God, and unworthy of the child of gospel faith, whose bereaving sorrow should be softened down to a calm and holy acquiescence to the equity of the divine will, and irradiated with the bright and glorious hope of a re-union in heaven. Religion does not attempt to prevent our tears, but seeks to moderate them by inspiring the hope of a blessed resurrection. The celebrated Burke having lost an only son, with a mournful and murmuring eloquence exclaimed,—"The storm has gone over me, and I lie like one of those old oaks which the late hurricane has scattered about me. I am stripped of all my honours; I am torn up by the roots, and lie prostrate on the earth. There, and prostrate there, I must unfeignedly recognise the divine *justice*, and, in some measure, submit to it." Ah! he had buried his heart in the coffin of his child, and

could scarcely forgive God for the bereavement! The Rev. Leigh Richmond, the author of "The Dairyman's Daughter—a little work which has been made the successful instrument of the conversion of many, and been sanctified to the spiritual benefit of thousands of God's Israel—shortened a life of pre-eminent usefulness by excessive and—we had like to have said—heathenish grief for his departed son. Though his death was such an one as to gladden any parent's heart, yet the bereaving dispensation so completely crushed the father's energies and spirits, that, like the unmated bird, he pined away and died. Such sinful grief shows how potent and lasting is true affection, which cannot justly be considered mortal; and may truly be regarded as a practical and mournful illustration of the affirmation of the prince of Israel: "Love is as strong as death." How wrong to set our affections so intensely on things below, that when the parting hour comes—as come it must—the death of a dear friend proves the instrument of the death of the survivor! All the "things on the earth" are but as the beautiful and glittering bubble which bursts *whilst* we admire it; or like the sheltering *gourd which* was blasted before the rise of

the next day's sun; or like the lovely flower fresh and fragrant in the morning, but in the evening "cut down and withered:" we should therefore regard them only as lent to us by God, to be recalled at His pleasure. To such mourners how appropriate is the beautiful language of John Angell James:—"Christian! why weepest thou? Look up—heaven is smiling above you. Look on—heaven is opening before you. Let your tears, if they must fall, be as the drops of rain which fall in the sunshine, and reflect the colours of the rainbow. The last tear of earth will soon be wiped away amidst the first smile of heaven; and that smile will be eternal!"

With the Gospel in our hands, and its heavenly and counter-hopes fixed in our hearts, we are not to "sorrow even as others which have no hope." The "blessed" and enfranchised dead "sleep in Jesus." They are calm and quiet; and so should we be. If they slept in heathenism, or in infidelity, then we might be crushed with sorrows. But

"They sleep in Jesus and are bless'd,
How soft their slumbers are!
From sufferings and from sin releas'd,
And freed from every snare."

Every atom of their dust is in safe keeping, and will rise again—full of animation and life—at the last day. It may be awaiting the blast of the archangel's trumpet at the bottom of the ocean, with the coral reef for its grave, and the sea-weed for its shroud, and the ever-chiming waves of the deep ringing its mournful requiem; or it may be scattering amongst the sands of the arid desert; or reposing in the forest shade of some far-off and sunny region; or resting in the beautiful mausoleum, or the grave of the quiet village churchyard: but wherever it may be, it resteth in hope. Listen to the holy teachings of Jesus:—"This is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should *lose nothing*, but should *raise it up again* at the last day." Father! thy much-loved Benjamin shall be released from the iron grasp of the grim tyrant, and again be folded to thy warm heart! Mother! that lovely babe which was smitten in thy arms like a nipt flower in winter, and and those of thy children who "are not," and on account of whose early exodus thou didst mourn like Rachel, who "would not be comforted," shall again be restored to thy bosom *where there is* "no more death!" Wife—

husband! ye shall meet again where there are no dying pillows, and no muttering farewells; the fleshly bond will be shredded, but the spiritual tie will be re-knit for eternity! Sister! "thy brother shall rise again!" But we should think less of our departed ones as buried in the grave, and more of them as living in glory. Angelic sentinels stand at the threshold of their tombs as at the entrance of the rocky sepulchre of Christ, and as we look into them and see nothing but the thrown-off grave-clothes, they assure us—as they did the two anxious women—"They are risen; they are not here: behold the place where ye laid them!"

"Behold them yonder, where the pure river
Flows warbling down before the throne of God,
And, shading on each side, the tree of life
Spreads its unfading boughs!—see how they shine,
In garments white, quaffing deep draughts of love,
And harping on their harps, new harmonies
Preparing for the ear of God, Most High!"

"I was once standing," says a Moravian missionary in Labrador, "by the grave of my departed child, under a brilliant sun and cloudless sky, when suddenly a light shadow passed over the green turf. Looking up for the cause, I beheld a snow-white gull winging her lofty

flight through the air. The thought immediately struck me—thus it is with the dear objects of my mournful remembrance. Here indeed lies the shadow, but above is the living principle. Nor was the reflection without comfort to my wounded spirit, since 'of such is the kingdom of heaven.' " Death is but the golden bowl, or pitcher, broken at the fountain; the spirit returns to God, and is a jewel in His hand: the tabernacle falls into ruins; but the inhabitant reaches the heavenly home of our Father-God! Our departed friends are "with the Lord." They pace the golden streets of the New Jerusalem;—they eat of the fruit of the tree of life;—they drink of the exhaustless stream of living water;—they sing "the song of Moses and the Lamb;"—they strike the golden lyre with the harpers in glory, and join in the overwhelming hallelujahs of the skies! "How does this reflection," said the pious widow of the sainted Huntingdon, "sweeten and smooth the anguish of separation! Let us contemplate them in every supposable view, and the prospect is full of consolation. We cannot think of them as what they were, or what they are, without pleasure. They are *the highly-favoured* of the Lord, who, having

finished all that they had to do in this vale of tears, are admitted to the higher services of the upper temple. True, when we look at our loss, nature will feel." Faith follows them to their high destiny, and beholds them crowned and blessed for evermore; and hope, with its deep yearnings, looks forward to the blissful prospect of a re-union where partings are no more. It was *this blessed persuasion* which strengthened the celebrated John Newton to do after the same fashion as the bereaved monarch of Israel, on the demise of an intensely loved wife. Such was their conjoint affection, that many feared her death would prove the instrument of his. And, yet, when they took the final farewell, they exchanged but a few tears, and broken utterances of encouragement. And when she died, he knelt down and gave God thanks for her peaceful and triumphant dismissal. Several of his ministerial friends offered to supply his pulpit during the earlier part of the season of trial, but he declined their help. On the same day that his wife died, like David, he went to the temple and worshipped. Whilst her corpse lay in his house, waiting the solemn commitment to the grave, *he preached* three times. And when the cold

earth had received into its womb the corrupting deposit of her he so much loved, he trusted himself to preach her funeral sermon! Referring to some of those who composed part of the general assembly and church of the first-born in heaven, he said:—"We know where they are, and how employed. There I humbly trust my dear Mary is waiting for me, and in the Lord's own time I hope to join with her, and all the redeemed, in praising the Lamb, once upon the cross, now upon the throne of glory." Now, what was it that sustained such a devoted husband under such a mournful and trying dispensation but that celestial hope which has sustained the bereaved heart in all ages and in all places—the hope of recognition in heaven? Everything is bearing us onward towards such a glorious consummation: every revolution of the wheels of nature—every sweep of the impetuous current of time—every day, and every hour, is conducting us towards the eternal fellowships and everlasting glory of the skies. "I must confess," says the heavenly-minded Richard Baxter, "as the experience of my own soul, that the expectation *of loving my* friends in heaven principally *kindles my* love to them on earth. If I thought

I should never know them, and consequently never love them, after this life is ended, I should in reason number them with temporal things, and love them as such; but I now delight to converse with my pious friends, in a firm persuasion that I shall converse with them for ever; and I take comfort in those of them who are dead or absent, as believing I shall shortly meet them in heaven, and love them with a heavenly love that shall there be perfected." Ere long, the righteous struggle and warfare will terminate, and we shall be ushered into the joy of our Lord, and, reunited to our departed friends, refer to the trials of the wilderness state, and think over the perils of the journey and battle of life, only that we may have a richer thanksgiving, and a louder song of praise! Who that has lost Christian friends does not heartily chime with the beautiful and hopeful language of the eloquent Tupper?—

"I look to recognise again, thro' the beautiful mask of their perfection,
The dear familiar faces I have somewhile lov'd on earth;
I long to talk, with grateful tongue, of storms and perils past,
And praise the mighty Pilot that hath steer'd us thro' the rapids."

When we purpose visiting a place we have never seen, a feeling of strangeness immediately creeps over our spirits. We anticipate no friends to greet us on our arrival—no welcome over the happy homestead—no familiar face to look lovingly upon us. And when we arrive there, we are strangers in a strange land; and much therefore that would be otherwise interesting and attractive, is but partially investigated and admired. But this will not be true of heaven; though it will be to us as a foreign land, all its blest inhabitants will not be strangers to us, nor shall we be to them. Nay, heaven is our Fatherland, and earth is the strange country; and we feel its loneliness the more we are bereaved of our believing friends. We now feel towards heaven as we never felt before. It has new attractions for us it possessed not when our friends were with us on earth. It has plundered our earthly Paradise to enrich itself with those things which are congenial to its nature, and on which we had fixed our affections. Our departed ones are there, and our hearts have followed them to the skies. The home of the Christian is where his heart can find rest; and where can *it find rest* but in that blessed place in which

his friends are safely lodged? The holy group he loves the most are gathered home to God. So that heaven, though a region unknown to us, save by the soul-thrilling and gorgeous delineations of Scripture, will be devoid of that strangeness invariably experienced in strange places, and we shall feel at ease the moment we enter its golden portals; yea, we shall be more at home than in the pleasantest and happiest circles of earth! Parents, and husbands and wives, and children, and friends,—a numerous and various host—await our arrival in "the land flowing with milk and honey;" martyrs and apostles, prophets and patriarchs, are ready to welcome us to our everlasting home! "Wherefore, comfort one another with these words."

But there is *one friend in heaven* that were all others excluded, His presence and fellowship would infinitely more than constitute it a home, and that were all others admitted without Him, heaven might still retain its name, but its chief attraction and glory would be wanting: THAT FRIEND OF FRIENDS IS THE LORD JESUS! "Unto us who believe, He is precious." He laid aside His robes of majesty *and glory*; He left for a time His high and

dazzling throne, and the adorations of angelic intelligences; and He came down to this sin-polluted and sin-cursed world to save us from perishing. He assumed human flesh in a servant's form, and submitted to the ignominious death of the cross that we might have everlasting life. And now that He has left earth "to prepare a place for us," He has sent down His "Good Spirit" to purify our hearts by His grace, that we may be "glorified together with Him." He has been "made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." His name therefore is, as Bernard has it, "honey in our mouths, melody in our ears, and a jubilee in our hearts." "We love Him, because He first loved us." And who that loves Him can anticipate going into His immediate presence without being rapturized by the glorious and celestial prospect with enthusiastic and transporting joy! The Christian believer loves his earthly friends with a genuine and pure affection, but that affection does not exceed or reach the higher and the deeper love he feels towards the Saviour. This imperial and holy passion takes the precedent *of the love of* human ease and human glory—*of the love of* home, and country, and kindred.

—of the love of temporal consideration, and even of life itself. It constrains to the noblest self-denials; it produces exhibitions of the largest benevolence; it inspires to celestial and God-like actions. It thrills the soul with its magic power when no other passion—either of grief or joy—can move the leaden lethargy settled on it. And in life's last hours, it lights the eye of the dying Christian with etherial brightness, and he looks into the invisible world without a fear! Oh! this love makes the mortal agony sweet and pleasant, and the hard pillow of death softer than down! It transforms the dying chamber into the gate of heaven, and the vestibule of glory; and constitutes the last earthly hour the happiest of the mortal sojourn! It makes the valley of conflict and death to echo with the pæan of the exulting victor, and wreathes a garland of immortality round the place of sepulture! "Whom have we in heaven but Thee; and there is none upon earth we desire besides Thee!" "O help me," said the dying Janeway to his friends, "help me to praise Him, and admire Him that hath done such astonishing wonders for my soul! I shall presently behold Christ, who loved me, and died for me, and washed

me in His blood! Methinks I stand, as i
were, one foot in heaven, and by faith I se
the angels waiting to carry my soul to Jesus
and I shall be for ever with the Lord in glory
and who can choose but to rejoice in all this?'

"We cannot rest contented here,
Without some glimpses of Thy face;
And heaven without Thy presence there,
Would be a dark and tiresome place."

True, sometimes earthly friends are loved mor
than Jesus; but in heaven Christ will be all i
all to the redeemed: he will be the Alpha an
Omega, the beginning and the end, the firs
and the last. "I may be a thousand years b
your side in heaven," said a Welsh minister t
his inquiring and anxious wife—"withou
having seen you; for the first thing which wil
attract my notice when I arrive there, will b
my dear Saviour; and I cannot tell *when*
shall be for a moment induced to look at an
other object." Father and mother, husban
and wife, brother and sister, relative and friend
saints and angels, patriarchs and prophets, ma
be there, but heaven would be no heaven t
the ransomed and sanctified child of God, i
Christ was not there! It is His abiding pre

sence in glory that makes it heaven, just as the person of monarchy in a palace constitutes it a royal dwelling. Jesus Christ is the chief attraction in glory. He is the great magnet which will draw all holy hearts to himself, and gather all the myriads of heavenly worshippers to his footstool. "All the beauty of creation is deformity itself when compared with the person of Jesus: angels are not half so fair, nor the stars half so bright." The flashing glory of His star-gemmed diadem, and the beamings of His ravishing smile, will flood the everlasting city with an ocean of light. "The Lamb is the light thereof." The light of heaven is of a combined character; it flows from the eternal throne, and beams from Calvary's cross: the rays intermingle and beautify each other. And this harmonious illumination is the everlasting light of the everlasting city! Every diadem borrows its chief beauty and lustre from the dazzling diadem of the World's Redeemer. Every harp and song sends forth their richest melody when His mighty achievements are the glorious theme and burden. Every glorified spirit is happy only because He is the fountain of bliss. Christ is the light, the song, and the joy of heaven! "I like to

hear of the beauties of heaven," said a dying saint, "but I do not *dwell* upon them; no, what I rejoice in is—CHRIST WILL BE THERE! Where he is, there shall I be also. I know that he is in me, and I in him. I shall see him as he is. I delight in knowing *that*." "Sir, we would see Jesus," exclaimed certain Greeks to Philip, at one of the Hebrew festivals. They were not so much attracted by the pomp and splendour of the temple ceremonial, as charmed with the sacred name and wonderful history of Christ. To see Him—the Desire of Nations—the song and burden of prophecy—the prototype of all the types of the Levitical economy—the Redeemer and hope of sinful and despairing humanity—was the cardinal wish of their hearts. And so will it be in the heavenly temple. Christ will be regarded with infinitely greater interest than all the grandeur and pageantry of the everlasting city! The chief felicity of heaven will consist—not in wearing "a crown of righteousness"—not in "sitting down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God"—not in being the happy companions of angelic beings—not in re-union, and recognition, and eternal asso*ciation with* our believing friends—but in

dwelling in the presence and beholding the face of the precious Saviour for ever! The highest and deepest happiness of heaven is derived from the beatific vision of the Lamb. "I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness." "In Thy presence there is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." The happiness, therefore, of the celestial abode will be consummated in beholding Him who is "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person," our Priest, our Sacrifice, our Mediator, our all. O the bliss of seeing him as He is! O the raptures which will thrill the soul—and the pure and perpetual bliss which will ravish the spirit—in chanting the praises of "the Lamb that was slain," and singing the songs of redeeming love!

> "The thought of such amazing bliss,
> Should constant joys create!"

It is Saturday night with us now! It is the day of preparation—the day before the Great Feast! The night, it is true, is thickening around us, but this is only that the eternal day may be the more glorious as it bursts

through the thick folds of darkness upon our longing and delighted spirits. The wilderness way is more intricate and thorny, but we are just on the borders of the land of promise. And though the night is dark, and the way perplexing, faith looks through and beyond death and the grave, and sees the golden beams of approaching twilight—the harbingers of "good things to come"—the foreshadows of everlasting glory! We are watching for the sunrise, and looking for the unvespered Sabbath, which is drawing on. Like the princely patriarch of Uz, we are calmly and patiently waiting our appointed time, until our change shall come. We scent already the fragrance of the ever-blooming flowers of Paradise, and hear soft and ravishing melodies ever and anon breaking upon the shores of that blest world! The tug and din of the battle of life is well nigh over. The last tear will soon be shed, and the last sigh uttered. And we shall cross over Jordan, shouting—Victory! victory! through the blood of the Lamb! and entering into the joy of our Lord, shall join in the loud hosannahs and ascriptions of heaven, until the "river of life" trembles to *its deepest* depths, and the highest altitude of

the "everlasting hills" echoes with the overwhelming symphony! "And so shall we be ever with the Lord."

"For ever with the Lord!
Amen! so let it be;
Life from the dead is in that word—
Tis immortality!"

THE END.

POETRY

HARMONIZING WITH THE SENTIMENTS AND ARGUMENTS OF THE PRECEDING PAGES.

Recognition in Heaven.

"SOME tell us all earthly love must die,
Nor enter the heavenly land;
That friendship is lost above the sky,
'Midst the happy and joyous band.
And can it be so? on that blissful shore
Shall we meet the lov'd we have lost no more?

They tell us, that those unseen on earth
Shall be dear as an only child;
And the mother belov'd, who gave us birth,
Shall be met as the savage wild!
And can it be so in that land of love?
Are there no joys of reunion above?

They tell us the pastor, who taught us the way
To the blest abode of the just,
Shall know us no more in eternity's day,
Tho' the body's redeem'd from the dust.
And can it be so in that world of bliss?
Shall we love less *there* than we do in *this*?

They tell us the martyr who fell on the shore,
'Mid the war-cry, and horror untold,
Shall meet his lov'd flock with joy no more
Than the merchant who traffics for gold.
And will it be so, in that golden street
Where WILLIAMS, and all he held dear, shall meet?

Is *ignorance* found in the spirit's home?
Is *memory* left in the dust?
Then, shall we not feel that we stand *alone*,
As strangers among the just?
And can it be so, in that city of light,
Where love is unfading, and joy ever bright?

Is *darkness* found in that cloudless sky,
Veiling the life just past:
Forgotten the friends who saw us die,
All faithful and true to the last?
And can it be so? shall we meet no more,
When this feverish dream of life is o'er?

Then where is the pastor's "crown of joy?"
And where the reward of the saints' employ?
And why do we cherish this restless love,
If all will be lost or forgotten above?
Oh! can it be thus, in that blissful place,
Where we see the redeem'd ones face to face?"

A Brother and Sister in Heaven.

Oh! why did you tarry so long behind,
When your sister you loved so well
Was tuning her harp in the realms above—
In her new-born home of joy and love,
Where saints and where angels dwell?

Were you waiting the scent of the hawthorn tree
To be shed on your early tomb?
Oh! what were the blossoms of fleeting May
To the flowers of Heaven that last for aye,
All clothed in eternal bloom?

For the flowers of the earth I tarried not,
Their fragrance all fled with thee?
What cared I then, oh! my sister dear,
For the blossoms of spring to deck my bier,
When thou wert away from me?

Then, brother, why didst thou not sooner come,
And all earthly ties forego?
Oh! my sister dear, a father's prayer,
A mother's love and a mother's care,
Made home like a Heaven below!

Welcome, oh! welcome, my brother dear,
Hark! hark! to the angel throng,
They are singing their highest, holiest strain,
"All worthy the Lamb that on earth was slain,"
Let us hasten and join the song!

Put on, put on, this garment so white,
Take this harp of gold in thine hand,
And we will away on the pinions of love,
More swift by far than the wings of the dove,
To join with the heavenly band.

Together we'll climb the eternal hills,
And gather undying flowers;
We will pluck the leaves of the living vine,
And with Sharon's unfading rose combine
The hues of the rainbow bowers.

We are gone, we are gone, on our ether wings,
Now upward and onward we rise;
We were one below, my brother dear,
We are one in a higher, holier sphere—
Our home is the home of the skies!

W. M'COMB.

Re-union in Heaven.

"When shall we meet again?
Meet ne'er to sever!
When will peace wreathe her chain
Round us for ever?
Our hearts will ne'er repose
Safe from each blast that blows
In this dark vale of woes—
Never—no, never!

When shall love freely flow,
Pure as life's river?
When shall sweet friendship glow,
Changeless for ever?
Where joys celestial thrill,
Where bliss each heart shall fill,
And fears of parting chill—
Never—no, never!

Up to that world of light,
Take us, dear Saviour;
May we all there unite,
Happy for ever;
Where kindred spirits dwell,
There may our music swell,
And time our joys dispel—
Never—no, never!

Soon shall we meet again—
Meet ne'er to sever;
Soon will peace wreathe her chain
Round us for ever.
Our hearts will then repose
Secure from worldly woes:
Our songs of praise shall close—
Never—no, never!"



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